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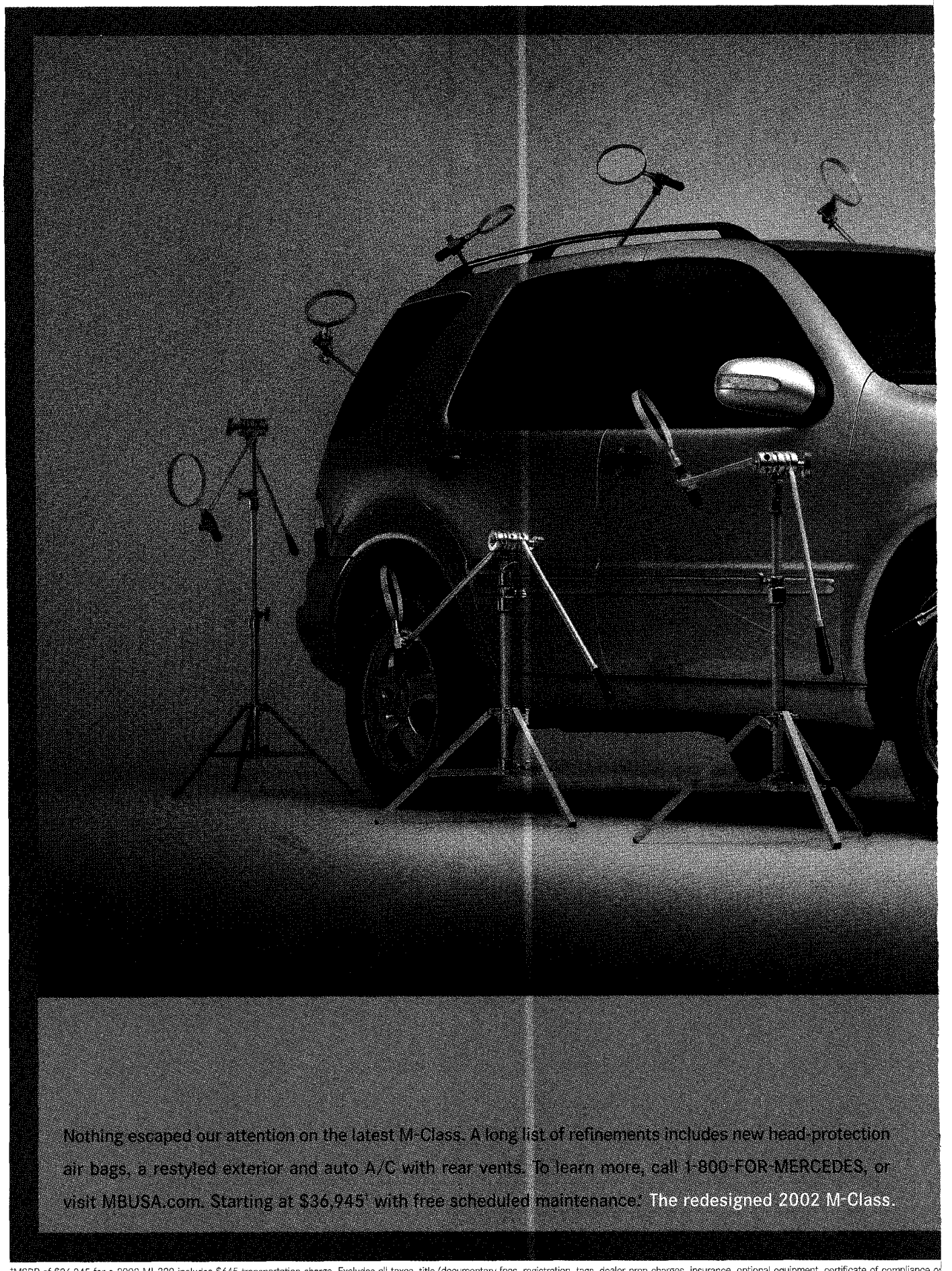

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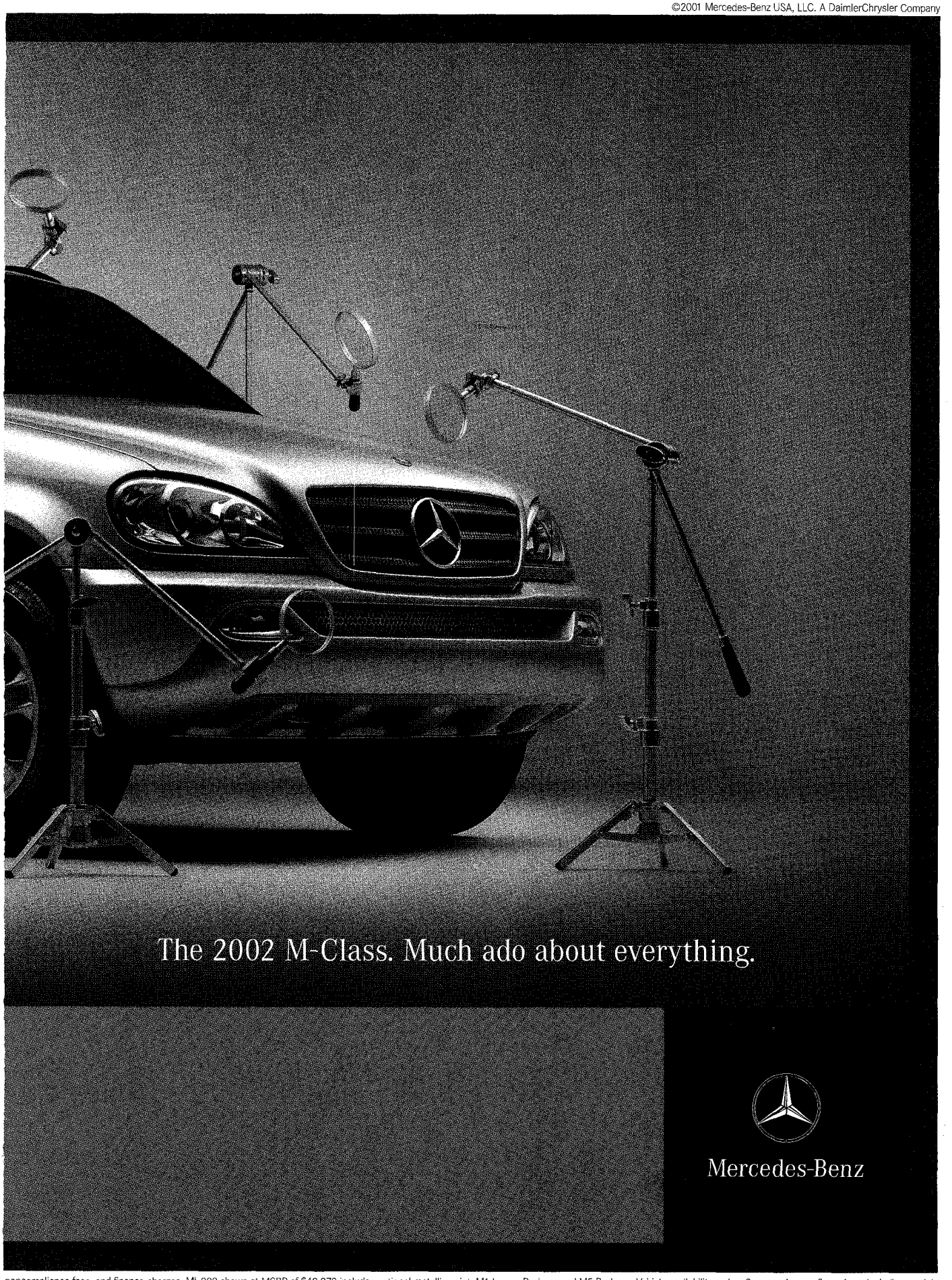

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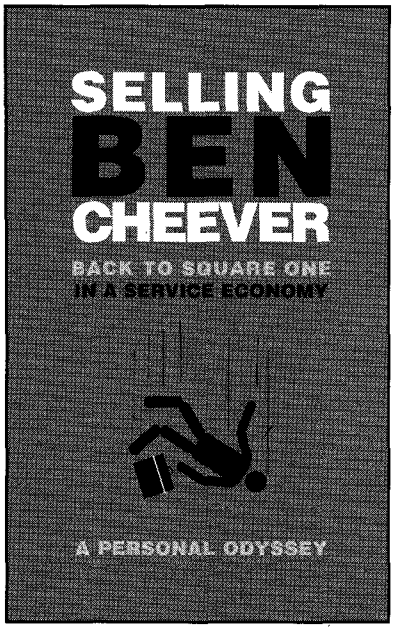

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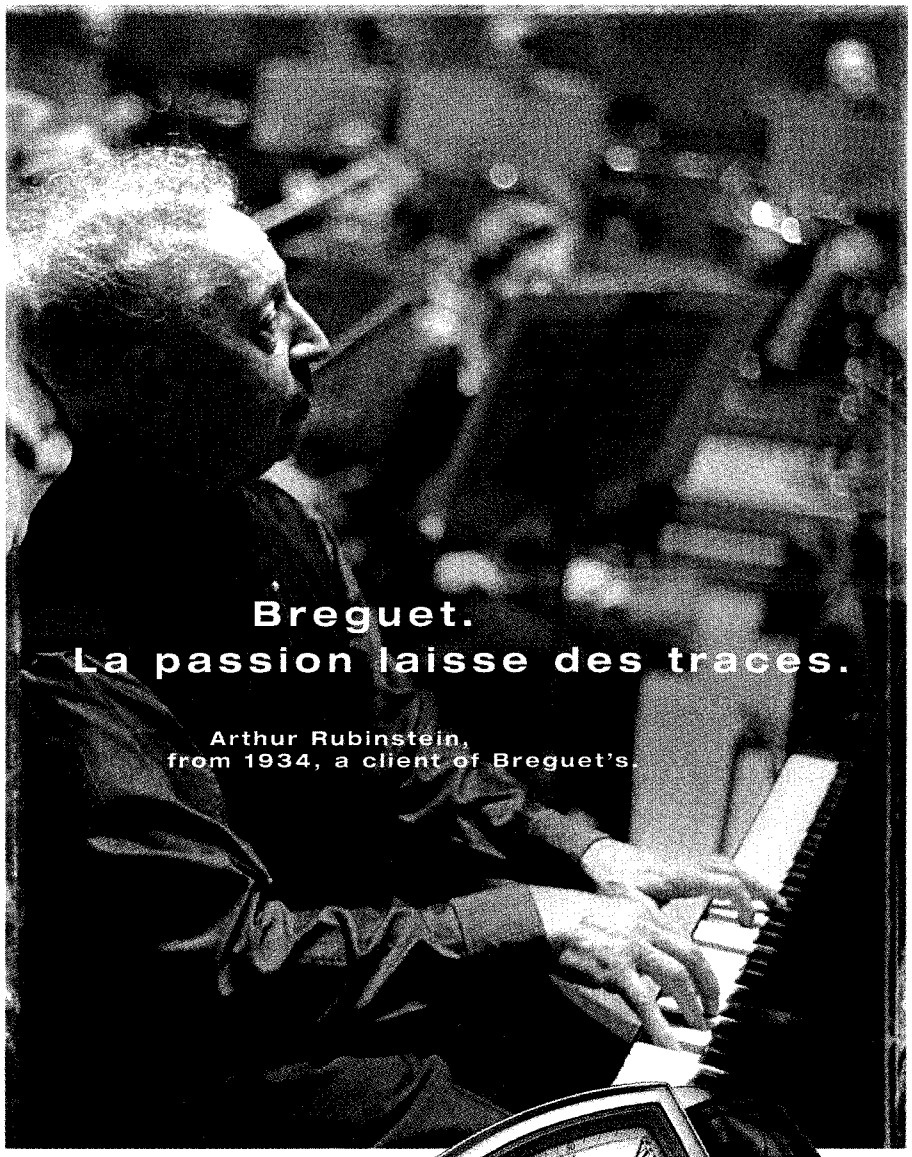

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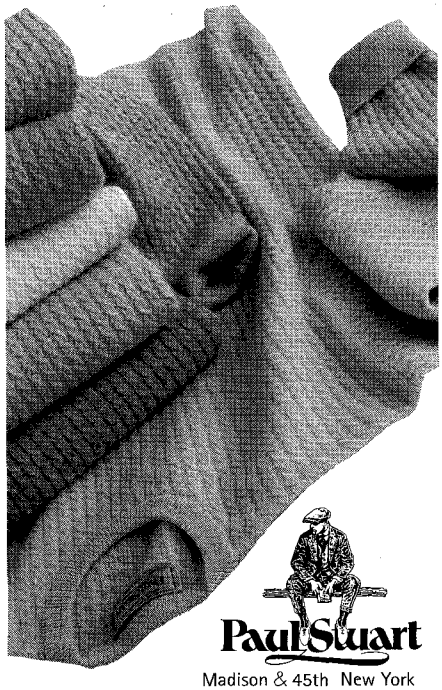

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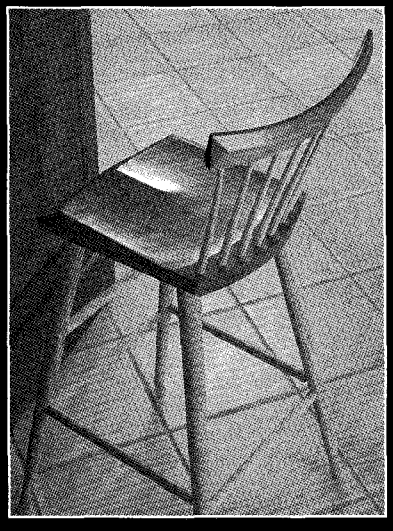

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PORTRAITS OF THE LADIES

Peter Schjeldahl, in his article on the Thomas Eakins retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, writes that Maud Cook posed for both "The Concert Singer" and the portrait that bears her name (The Art World, October 22nd). But "The Concert Singer" is in fact a portrait of Weda Cook, Maud's cousin. Schjeldahl also describes Eakins's failed attempts to get Maud to pose nude for him and the "pansexual heat" he sees in his work: he calls Maud's actual portrait "one of the most erotically charged pictures I had ever seen." He might have counterpointed this image with Eakins's remarkable portrait of his wife, Susan Macdowell Eakins—worn and aging, but intensely beautiful. She was also an artist, and appears, from what is known of their thirty-two-year marriage, to have been more than a match for this unconventional man.

Anne Vaughan
Philadelphia, Pa.

WRITING FOR LOVE

In her portrait of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Rebecca Mead has fun with the "American" idea that "all things worth having can be bought or taught" ("How to Be a Writer," October 15th). But she seems to have adopted the similarly simple idea that anything worth doing will be acclaimed or sold—how else to explain her impatience with all those "unpublished writers"? Although it may be hard to fathom working for a reason other than money, writers and artists do it all the time; culture relies on their willingness to gamble on their careers. Luckily, within capitalism, artists have the freedom to do what they want, including doing real work for no pay at all.

Lindsay Sterling
San Rafael, Calif.

A PLACE LIKE THAT

Mark Singer, in his article on Dearborn, Michigan, home to the nation's largest Arab-American community, disapproves of the Detroit *News* columnist Nolan Finley's advice that "the least" that Arab-Americans can do for their neighbors is to "help in every way possible to smash the network within their own communities that provides money and shelter to terrorists" ("Home Is Here," October 15th). Singer writes, "In other words, what the United States government's intelligence-gathering and law-enforcement apparatus had failed to accomplish . . . Arab citizens of Detroit, in a vigilante spirit that would validate their patriotism, should undertake themselves." But is that such an outrageous idea? Certainly Finley is open to criticism for assuming that such networks exist in these communities or are supported because of a shared ethnic background. But it's wrong to say that an official failure somehow relieves one of the responsibility to offer what help one can, or that to do so is vigilantism. A citizen who has the Keystone Cops for police still has a duty to come forward if he witnesses a murder. In that respect, Finley was right.

Howard W. Schreiber
New York City

Singer's piece on Dearborn was both welcome and disturbing. Dearborn is my home town. It used to be that, when I told people where I was from, they would ask if everyone really did drive a Ford (they really do). But now I get strange looks and different questions: Is my family safe in "a place like that"? Do I think that many terrorists are hiding there? Such reflexive ignorance overwhelms me; I am neither Arab nor Muslim, but I have lived most of my life with neighbors who are. The communities in Dearborn, like those throughout the country, are peaceful and—let us not forget—proudly American.

Camille Noe
New York City

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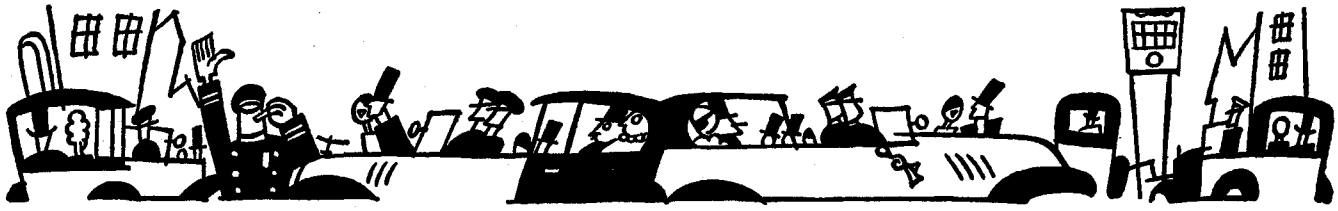

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ELAINE STRITCH AT LIBERTY
The Broadway star sings songs and tells tales about her life in the theatre, in a one-woman show co-created with *The New Yorker's* theatre critic John Lahr. George Wolfe is the director. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

EVERETT BEEKIN
Bebe Neuwirth and Robin Bartlett lead the cast in Richard Greenberg's new play, which traces the history of a Jewish family through four generations, from New York to California. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

45 SECONDS FROM BROADWAY
Neil Simon's new comedy is set in the Edison Hotel coffee shop, a hangout for theatre types. Directed by Jerry Zaks. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

THE GLORY OF LIVING
Philip Seymour Hoffman directs a new drama by Chicago playwright Rebecca Gilman, which examines domestic violence. In previews. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 206-1515.)

NEEDCOMPANY'S KING LEAR
The Belgian troupe's deconstructed version of Shakespeare's play, under the direction of Jan Lauwers. Oct. 31 and Nov. 2-3 at 7:30 and Nov. 4 at 3. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

NOISES OFF
Patti LuPone and Peter Gallagher lead the cast in a revised version of Michael Frayn's 1982 backstage comedy. Jeremy Sams is the director. Two previews on Oct. 31. Opens Nov. 1 at 6:30. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

QED
The atom-bomb physicist Richard Feynman's book (with Ralph Leighton) "Tuva or Bust!" was the inspiration for this two-character play by Peter Parnell, starring Alan Alda and Kellie Overbey. Gordon Davidson is the director. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

SEXAHOLIX . . . A LOVE STORY
John Leguizamo's new solo show. In previews through Nov. 3. Opens Nov. 4 at 3. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SONGS OF PARADISE
From the Folksbiene Yiddish Theatre, the 1989 satirical retelling of the Book of Genesis, based on Itsik Manger's Biblical poetry. In previews. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

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SPEAKING IN TONGUES
A new play by Andrew Bovell (who co-wrote the film "Strictly Ballroom"), which is described as a "psychological thriller, murder mystery, and partner-swapping satire." Karen Allen and Kevin Anderson lead the cast. Mark Clements is the director. Previews begin Oct. 26. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

WHERE'S MY MONEY?
John Patrick Shanley's dark comedy, about two bush-league divorce lawyers from Brooklyn. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

THE WOMEN
Scott Elliott directs a cast that includes Kristen Johnston, Rue McClanahan, Cynthia Nixon, Jennifer Tilly, Mary Louise Wilson, and Jennifer Coolidge, in Clare Boothe Luce's 1936 satire. With costumes by Isaac Mizrahi. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

WONDER OF THE WORLD
A new comedy by David Lindsay-Abaire, starring Sarah Jessica Parker as a runaway housewife with a disturbed husband. Christopher Ashley is the director. Two previews on Oct. 31. Opens Nov. 1 at 6:45. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AN ADULT EVENING OF SHEL SILVERSTEIN
The Atlantic Theatre Company opens the season with ten one-acts by the writer-cartoonist-composer-lyricist. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

BY JEEVES
P. G. Wodehouse's manservant has been musicalized by Alan Ayckbourn (book and lyrics) and Andrew Lloyd Webber (score). Mr. Ayckbourn is the director. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)
A revival of Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield's comedy, in which three actors (Peter Ackerman, Jeremy Shamos, and David Turner) perform thirty-seven plays and a hundred and fifty-four sonnets in under two hours. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE OF DEATH
As a couple about to celebrate—if that's the right word—their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, Helen Mirren and Ian McKellen square off in Strindberg's depiction of the blasted heath of matrimony, and they do battle magnificently. Their attacks on each other are so predictable and so regular that you laugh as often as you wince. Mirren, playing a former actress (if there is such a thing as a former actress) is droll and wicked, and McKellen, in his deep embrace of the role of an Army captain who comes face to face with his own mortality, is a life force; as a presence onstage, he is the sound of two hands clapping. Directed by Sean Mathias; also with David Strathairn. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/22/01.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

EVERYTHING THAT RISES MUST CONVERGE
New York Theatre Workshop presents a staging by Karin Coonrod of three stories by Flannery O'Connor. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

HAVANA IS WAITING
In Eduardo Machado's new drama, a Cuban-American man returns to Havana after being sent to Miami as a child in 1961. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

HEDDA GABLER
This "Hedda," starring Kate Burton and directed by Nicholas Martin, is all surface brightness—it twinkles rather than burns. Jon Robin Baitz's colloquial adaptation of Ibsen's drama leaves little room for shading or depth, and the entire cast, which includes Michael Emerson, Harris Yulin, David Lansbury, and Angela Thornton, suffers under Nicholas Martin's heavy-handed and misguided direction, as does the audience. (10/22/01) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

THE LATE HENRY MOSS
In Sam Shepard's latest play, a pair of estranged brothers (Ethan Hawke and Arliss Howard) show up at their abusive, alcoholic father's broken-down house to bury him. First, though, they bully the hell out of each other. The show has been pared down by half an hour since it débuted at San Francisco's Magic Theatre, but it still drags on too long and lacks the thrilling flinch-inducing impact of Shepard's earlier, less diffuse plays. The supporting cast members (Clark Middleton, Jose Perez, and Sheila Tousey) are excellent. Joseph Chaikin is the director. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes Nov. 4.)

LIGHT YEARS
"Light" is the right word to describe this one-act that purports to tell the intertwined stories of four students through their college years. Billy Aronson's script is often well observed and funny, but it merely skates across the surfaces of their lives—with the unforgivable failing of not making those surfaces con-

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sistently interesting. The first few minutes are wonderfully manic farce (helped by director Jamie Richards' nearly Ortonesque understanding of the uses of slamming doors), but the show turns slow, murky, familiar, and, by the end, sappy. Mr. Aronson has nothing new to say about finding one's identity or the value of enduring friendship, and the actors and Mr. Richards, hard as they try, can't supply what's missing. (Theatre Three, 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 4.)

MAMMA MIA!
Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus's musical, set on a mythical Greek island, employs the songs of their defunct rock band, Abba. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.)

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO
Once again, David Herskovits and his Target Margin Theatre triumphantly re-create a classic. In this case, it's the Beaumarchais play on which the opera was based, newly translated by "the company." Miranda Hoffman's bawdily elegant costumes set the tone for the production right away, with a combination of modern and eighteenth-century elements which parallels the script's similarly successful amalgamation of a classic, poetic translation and modern, slangier language. The actors—all terrific—make it clear that they know they're playing a farce, and yet their pain and confusion as the plots and counterplots unfold are just as convincing as their knowing asides. And Mr. Herskovits's ability to focus all the intelligence and high energy on display makes this a vivid, funny, rich, and even relevant evening. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 358-3657. Closes Nov. 17.)

METAMORPHOSES
Ovid said "All things change, nothing perishes," and Mary Zimmerman's fluid and beautiful interpretation of several legends from his fifteen-book history of the world is reassuring proof. Her modern staging, which charmingly and wittily incorporates both original and colloquial language and costumes that range across time, confirms the enduring and elemental power of myth. Here—on a stark set composed only of a large crystal chandelier, a battered manorial door, a suspended image of sky and clouds, and an oblong, twenty-seven-foot pool—real love, thwarted, begets love in other forms; kindness is rewarded in unexpected ways; and evil often backfires. But sometimes the good are punished and the bad triumph, because even the gods in charge surrender to flawed human emotion. A tonic for anyone who needs to believe that terrible events can transform us. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
It's gimmick Shakespeare, and it really works. The accomplished Aquila Theatre Company has set the Bard's comic examination of trust, mistrust, and sharp-tongued singles destined for couplehood in London in an "Avengers"-influenced Swinging Sixties. The men wear bowlers and Savile Row suits, the women are smart and slinky in black vinyl. The story is advanced with the help of some go-go choreography, and "Hey Nonny Nonny" sung to a bossa-nova beat is just plain cool. What is not at all tricked up is the language, which is beautifully spoken, dramatically revealing, and crystalline in effect. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 239-6200.)

OEDIPUS REX
Sophocles' tragedy, in condensed form, from the Metropolitan Playhouse. (220 E. 4th St. 995-5302.)

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS
It's one thing for a man to develop the ability to stretch his scrotum until it's the size of a dinner plate, but another to share this talent with the world. These two Australians, Simon Morley and David (Friendy) Friend, call their transformations "installations" and give them such suggestive names as "Kentucky Fried Chicken," "The Windsurfer," and "A Slowly Emerging Mollusk." The success, if you will, of an installation depends largely upon an assistant with a video camera who projects the finished work, in extreme close-up, onto a giant screen. It's all supposed to be good, clean, nasty fun; the Aussies even profess embarrassment at the success of their "little pub show." Still, it's a con: fifteen minutes into their act they are utterly naked and out of ideas. They can't go on, but they do. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Kristen Johnston and Cynthia Nixon in Clare Boothe Luce's satire "The Women."

ALISON SIEFFER

RAVE MOM
In her latest work, the performance artist Ann Magnuson examines Ecstasy, aging, and Silicon Alley. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

REBEL WITHOUT A PAUSE
The performance artist Reno, in her latest show. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

REEFER MADNESS
The hysterically overwrought 1936 cautionary film on the evils of mari-hoo-wana is the inspiration for this scattershot musical. Driven by a cast committed to silliness and loaded with twinkle, the evening scores its fair share of laughs. Robert Torti makes a particularly strong comic impression in dual roles: Jack, supplier of weed and corrupter of American youth; and Jesus, surely the most suavely self-assured Saviour ever to grace the stage. But the jokes tend to repeat themselves, and the songs never quite rise to the level of compositions; they're just forced rhymes set in musical-comedy rock modes. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

SAVE IT FOR THE STAGE: THE LIFE OF REILLY
Charles Nelson Reilly performs an autobiographical one-man show. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

THE SHAPE OF THINGS
Gretchen Mol, Paul Rudd, Rachel Weisz, and Frederick Weller are in the cast of the Almeida Theatre Company staging of Neil LaBute's latest play. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

SHINY HOT NIGHTS: MORE SONGS OF JONI MITCHELL
The performance artist John Kelly stars in a follow-up to his 1997 one-man paean to the singer. Saturdays at 8. (Fez, 380 Lafayette St. 533-2680.)

THE SQUARE
The Ma-Yi Theatre presents sixteen short plays examining the Asian-American experience. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

THOU SHALT NOT
Susan Stroman is the director of a new musical, based on Zola's "Thérèse Raquin" and set in New Orleans after the Second World War, with a score by Harry Connick, Jr., and a book by David Thompson. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

TICK, TICK . . . BOOM!
The title represents the late author Jonathan Larson's fear of time running out on his musical dreams. The show is set on the eve of the composer's thirtieth birthday—his *Walpurgisnacht*—as he is caught between the pressures to succeed and to settle. The slick, hardworking cast of three is well directed by Scott Schwartz, and, with Larson's plotline deftly reworked by David Auburn, the production has a fetching modesty and reveals Larson's idiosyncrasy, energy, and promise. (7/9/01) (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL
A librarian reports mysterious findings from a book a hundred and twenty-three years overdue, in a play by Glen Berger. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

UNWRAP YOUR CANDY
It's hard to imagine what Doug Wright was thinking when he put together this quartet of one-act "dark comedies." (He wrote "Quills," a wickedly funny Grand Guignol take on the Marquis de Sade's institutionalization at Charenton.) The curtain raiser, in which the inner dialogues of a piggish theatre audience are broadcast in voice-over that continues as a running joke between plays, is pretty amusing if you're not similarly piggish. But it soon becomes obvious that this was a preëmptive strike meant to imply that audiences might be too dim to get Wright's sensibility. In spite of the excellent cast, the plays that follow, with the exception of one that features a sinister talking fetus who tortures his mother from inside the womb, are not very funny, and they also don't tap into anything incisive or new or dark about their themes (murder, child rearing, secrets, etc.). (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303. Closes Nov. 11.)

URINETOWN
The amount of fun to be had at this musical, by Greg Kotis (book and lyrics) and Mark Hollmann (music and lyrics), is in direct proportion to the unpleasantness of the title. Its central idea is that an evil corporation controls all the toilets in a city that bears some resemblance to New York, but you don't have to rack your brains about the ramifications of that any more than the authors did; the show is really no more and no less than a terrifically spirited sendup of musicals and their conventions, as self-conscious and gag-happy as a Warner Bros. cartoon (not only does a sign saying "Secret Hideout" hang above a secret hideout, the sign has an arrow on it). John Cullum, Jeff McCarthy, Nancy Opel, and Spencer Kayden lead the uniformly wonderful cast, which is under the direction of John Rando, and John Carraga is responsible for the clever musical staging. (10/1/01) (Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL
Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.

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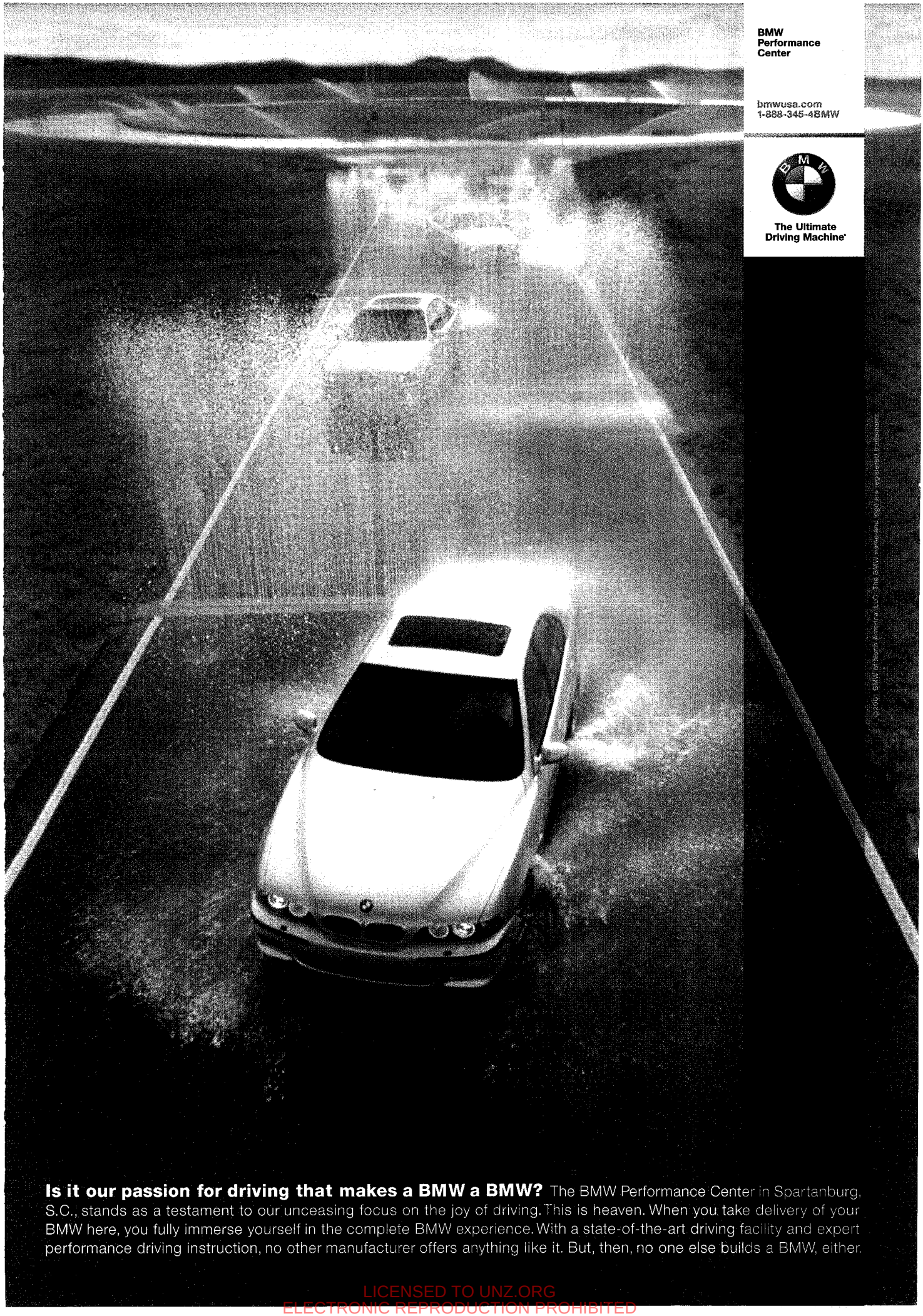

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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.
BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.
CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.
CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.
THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.
FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.
42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.
KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
LOVE, JANIS
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.
THE MUSIC MAN
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.
PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.
THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
Oct. 31 at 8: "Amazed in Burning Dreams," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Manon Pas de Deux," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," and "Jabula." ♦ Nov. 1 at 8: "Symphony in C," "Dim Lustre," and "Rodeo." ♦ Nov. 2 at 8: "Amazed in Burning Dreams," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," "Swan Lake Pas de Deux," and "Gong." ♦ Nov. 3 at 11:30 A.M.: A family matinée. ♦ Nov. 3 at 2: "Gong," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," "Dim Lustre," and "Marimba." ♦ Nov. 3 at 8: "Bruch Violin Concerto," "Dim Lustre," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Nov. 4 at 2: "Black Tuesday," "Amazed in Burning Dreams," "Diana and Acteon Pas de Deux," and "Marimba." ♦ Nov. 4 at 7:30: "Clear," "Reverie," "Gong," and "Symphony in C." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Nov. 4.)
GARTH FAGAN DANCE
The eleven-member troupe premières "Music of the Line/Words in the Shape," set to two John Adams compositions, "Hoodoo Zephyr" and "Violin Concerto." The "Lion King" choreographer also presents repertory works as well as re-creations and modifications of older pieces. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 30-Nov. 3 at 8 and Nov. 4 at 2 and 7:30. Through Nov. 11.)
MAURA NGUYEN DONOHUE / PATRICIA HOFBAUER
Maura Nguyen Donohue had planned to make a hopeful dance—until September 11. "My earlier pieces were about being caught in the middle and

JONATHAN BECKER

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pulled from two sides," says the choreographer, whose mother is Vietnamese and father is American. "But this was going to be a celebration: two cultures cohabiting in the space that is a child." "Both," performed to horsehair fiddle, bamboo flute, and Zen chants that rise above a speedy drum-and-bass beat, still features dancers streaming together, then siphoning off into slower, quieter duets and solos. But now they also collide and subside to the floor. "Suddenly the individual things we are," she says, "seemed very important." Patricia Hofbauer's dance tragicomedy, "Over My Dead Body," completes the bill. (Dance Theatre Workshop at the Duke on 42nd St, 229 W. 42nd St. 924-0077. Nov. 1-3 at 8 and Nov. 4 at 3.)

"108 DAYS OF CLOUDS"
The choreographer Kei Takei evokes a journey of 108 days, corresponding to the number of human attachments according to Buddhist philosophy. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 1-4 at 8:30.)

"GROUP EXPERIENCE"
The choreographer Sarah Michelson leads a group of collaborators which includes Miguel Gutierrez, Parker Lutz, Cheryl Thierren, and Adrienne Truscott. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 1-4 at 8:30. Through Nov. 11.)

"BLUE/GREEN"
A few years ago, the choreographer Alan Good saw Elke Rindfleisch perform and said, "She seemed a little breathless at the end of her two dances, not from exhaustion, but from sheer belief." Rindfleisch believes in movement, "the endless possibilities of putting things together in space," she says (breathlessly). She and the other supple dancers in the program's solos, duet, and trio stroke space as if it were soft fur. The dances move along pleasingly, like a train of unforced thought. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 334-7479. Nov. 2-4 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

ALICE COOPER
Halloween's veritable personification, the beloved shock-rock elder statesman Alice Cooper may not worry many parents anymore (he is, after all, an avowed teetotaller), but his commitment to cheekily macabre showmanship remains steadfast. Cooper is touring behind his new album, "Dragontown." (Roseland Ballroom, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Oct. 31 at 7:30.)

MEDESKI MARTIN & WOOD
These wildly industrious acid-jazz hipsters easily switch between an acoustic mainstream piano trio and their more plugged-in and funky incarnations. John Medeski can get around an acoustic keyboard with the same flair with which he handles the Hammond organ, while Chris Wood and Billy Martin are, by now, a one-heartbeat bass-and-drums team. For this show, which coincides with the release of their latest live album, "Electric Tonic," the trio is joined by the adventurous downtown guitarist Marc Ribot and the *très*-hip Canadian turntablist Kid Koala. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 31 at 8.)

CARNEGIE HALL JAZZ BAND
Overhauls of classic Latin jazz tunes (Tito Puente's "Oye Como Va," Mario Bauza's "Mambo Inn," and Ernesto Lecuona's "Andalucia,"), newly commissioned works, and a performance by the woodwind virtuoso and guest soloist Paquito D'Rivera are the highlights of this program by the polished ensemble, which is led by the trumpeter Jon Faddis. (247-7800. Nov. 1 at 8.)

MIDNIGHT OIL
Unjustly exiled to one-hit-wonderdom here in the States after the success of its plaintive 1987 single, "Beds Are Burning," this Australian band actually has a storied career behind it and boasts a huge global following for its righteous brand of energetic, clamoring rock. Politically conscious and active, Midnight Oil remains as outspoken as ever, and the band recently announced plans to release a new record, "Capricornia," next February. (The World, Broadway at 43rd St. 307-7171. Nov. 2 at 8.)

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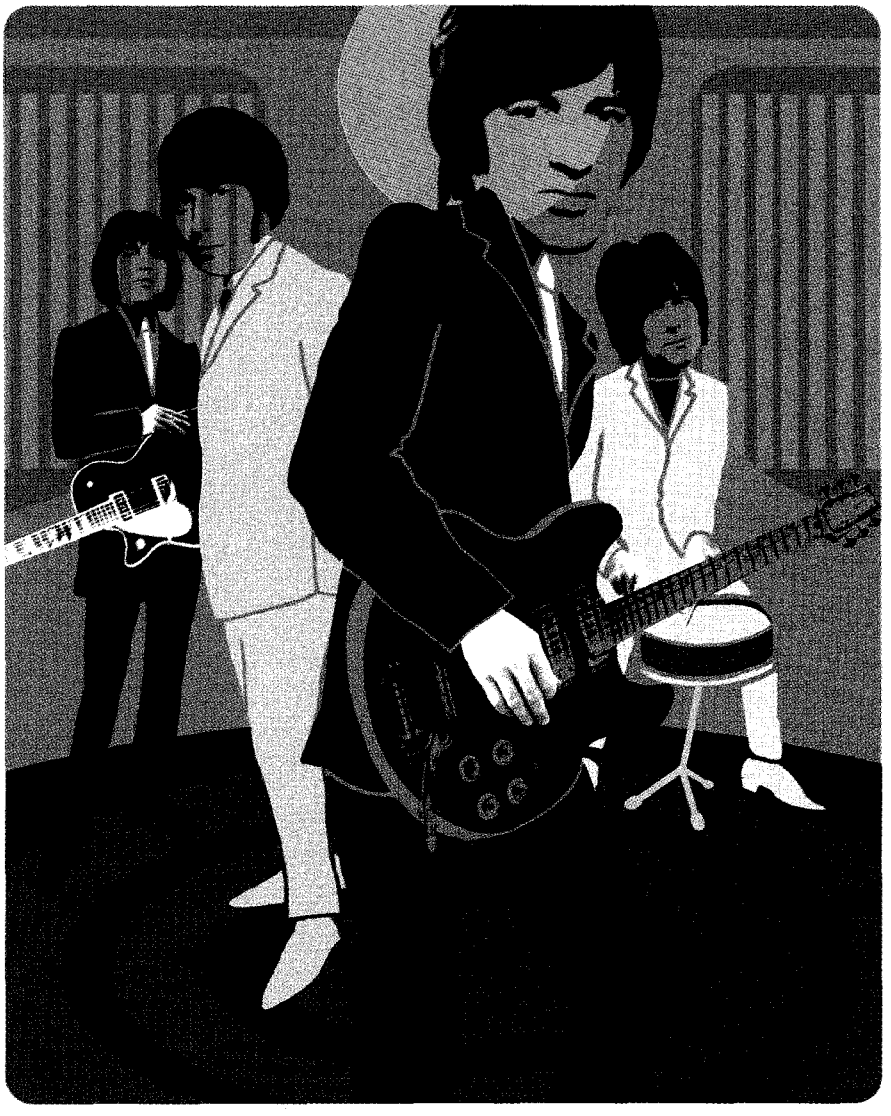
"IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC AT THE BLARNEY STAR"
The long-running Friday-night concert series at the Blarney Star has moved, temporarily, from its lower-Manhattan home to the Irish Arts Center. This week's show brings in the great Uilleann Pipe player Paddy Keenan and the County Kerry singer and guitarist Tommy O'Sullivan. The music will return to the Blarney Star when conditions permit. (553 W. 51st St. 757-3318. Nov. 2 at 10.)

URI CAINE ENSEMBLE
This smart and swinging pianist is also a visionary who takes his musical history seriously—or at least seriously enough to bend, twist, and reshape it to his own liking. In the past he's reconfigured the music of Bach and Mahler; now, with his new album, "The Sidewalks of New York: Tin Pan Alley," he's doing the same for turn-of-the-century ditties, show tunes, and barroom ballads. (The Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16th St. 917-606-8200. Nov. 3 at 8.)



The obscure but influential sixties British rock act the Creation, at Warsaw.

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Nov. 1: The downtown aesthetes **Les Savy Fav** offer murky, guitar-based hard rock with angry-young-man metal leanings. Nov. 2-3: **Robert Randolph,** an astounding twenty-four-year-old pedal steel guitarist from Newark, New Jersey, plays with a rare grace, thanks to the origin of his art—the House of God church, where Randolph long ago picked up the tradition of "sacred steel" gospel music. Over the past year or so Randolph has also become a big presence on more secular terrain. He's played with John Medeski, Derek Trucks, and other members of the jam-band scene. With **Davíd Garza,** an Irving, Texas, native and a mind-blowingly inventive singer-songwriter. He sings straight-ahead pop, torch songs, and confessionals that are quite unlike anything else out there.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—**Femi Kuti,** the son of the Afro-beat architect Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, brings his sixteen-piece band, Positive Force, to town on Nov. 3.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 31: The **Sun Ra Arkestra.** The maestro has returned to Saturn, but his band plays on under the skillful direction of longtime saxophonist Marshall Allen. The unexpected is still to be expected. Nov. 2: **Solex** is the alter ego of an Amsterdam record-store owner named Elisabeth Esselink. Her spunky début album, 1998's "Solex vs. the Hitmeister," displayed a broken-sounding, sample-heavy pop. For her sophomore release, "Pick Up," she sneakily sampled her own bootleg recordings of small-time Dutch acts and created a very personal vocabulary of fractured beats and harmonies. She's touring to promote her latest album, "Low Kick and Hard Bop," which is full of boundless energy and amusing high jinks. Nov. 4: The Boca Raton, Florida, outfit **Dashboard Confessional** offers a night of overwrought indie rock. With the former teen-age wonder and Radish front man **Ben Kweller.**

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Nov. 2-3: The stridently silly members of **Man or Astroman?** dress up like astronauts to play furious surf-guitar instrumentals on a stage that recalls the set of "Lost in Space." With or without the spacey shenanigans, their sonic hybrid of vintage Devo and Dick Dale is still raucously inventive. Nov. 4: **Davíd Garza** (see the Bowery Ballroom).

WARSAW
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-5252)—Nov. 3-4: A two-day garage-rock festival with the **Electric Prunes** headlining on the first night and the **Creation** on the second. The Prunes return with members of the original 1965-67 lineup—James Lowe, Mark Tulin, and Ken Williams—who gave the world "I Had Too Much to Dream Last Night" and "Get Me to the World on Time." The Creation are a legendarily obscure British band—reportedly one of John (Johnny Rotten) Lydon's favorites—who were known in the mid-sixties for a feedback-heavy sound fashioned by the Who producer Shel Talmy. The guitarist Eddie Phillips, who will be appearing here along with another original member, the vocalist Bob Garner (the Buzzcocks' Tony Barber will handle the bass), developed a style of attacking his instrument with a violin bow, something Jimmy Page later became famous for. Phillips's antics can be heard to great effect on their 1966 single "Making Time," which was featured in the 1998 movie "Rushmore."

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Dec. 1: Word of mouth is starting to build for **Paula West,** an assured singer of durable standards whose performances have a lived-with ease that eludes many of the pearly-toothed upstarts now crowding the scene. Dining.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Nov. 1-3: The **John Patitucci** quartet. It seems that everywhere you looked in the past few years you found the bassist Patitucci, who put a spin on the work of everyone from Roy Haynes to Karin Allyson to Wayne Shorter. A superior instrumentalist whose technical skills never get in the way of solid music making, Patitucci is also an elegant composer and bandleader, judging from his recent solo albums. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Nov. 1-4: The **Chuck Mangione** band. Have hat and flugelhorn, will entertain. Mangione has been making his hard-core fans feel good for longer than anyone would have dreamed during his seventies heyday.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (339-4095)—Through Nov. 3: **Ann Hampton Callaway** swings on everything from "Route 66" to Ella Fitzgerald's scat classic "Mr. Paganini," and she swings hard. But she can also find the mellow core of "Good Morning Heartache," "In the Wee Small Hours," and "Tenderly." This fervent and funny vocalist is accompanied by an expert jazz ensemble featuring, this week, the illustrious pianist **Kenny Barron** and the fine saxophonist and singer **Lance Bryant,** who joins Callaway for an affecting "For All We Know" in tribute to Ray Charles and Betty Carter.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 4: The **John Scofield** quartet. The veteran guitarist Scofield has found a new niche with the young neo-funksters. The transition was seamless for Scofield due to an innate funkiness that has greased his playing since the mid-seventies. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—No longer the new kid on the block with the magic fingers, the pianist **Cyrus Chestnut** (here with his trio

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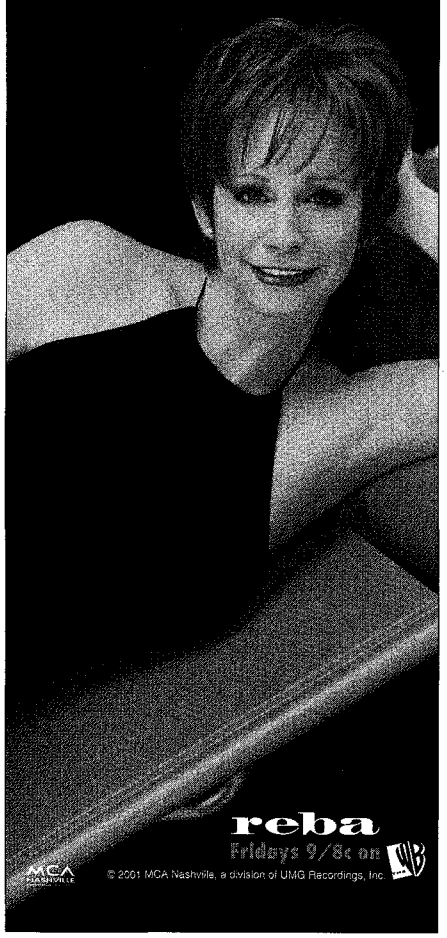

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

One Man's Meat

It's not every store that gets its own sketch on "Saturday Night Live," but **JEFFREY** (449 W. 14th St.; 206-1272), an outpost of high style in the meatpacking district, has that distinction. As it turns out, the parody, in which customers are humiliated by a pair of stuck-up salesmen, couldn't be less accurate: the place is as cheery and accommodating as an old-fashioned general store, albeit one that carries Balenciaga cutaways. Yellow paper happy-face lanterns dangle from the ceiling, and a three-tiered scalloped fountain splashes in the center of the room, which has the spare lines of a loft except that it's crammed with pink snakeskin satchels and Chanel ski boots. Recently, a young woman stood between two sets of cone-heeled mules and tried to make a choice; around her the store was full of stroller-pushing downtown types and even one couple towing a German shepherd with an American flag around its neck. "Darling, if you like that one, get that one," a salesman with a shaved head and a goatee said to the young woman. "They're both cool, you know." Though the owner is from a shoe-business family, footwear isn't the only lure: near the d.j. booth is a rack of giddy merchandise that includes a curly lamb Gucci coat that, but for its austere beige color, would make the wearer look like Big Bird's chic cousin ($4,695).

A few cobblestoned blocks away, where bloody carcasses on hooks once constituted the entire retail landscape, **DESTINATION** (32-36 Little West 12th St.; 727-2031) carries outré accessories to rival whatever Jeffrey has on tap. "Björk bought something here just the other day—a sort of rain-dance hat," the clerk recalled, though the Icelandic singer could as well have settled on a checkered trilby, a velvet purse with chain-mail fringe, or a pair of neo-Victorian spectator pumps. So immense is the space that there's even room for a store-within-a-store: a red wooden box about the size of a toolshed that serves as a gallery for local artists. The current exhibition, devoted to a milliner who goes by the single name Parrish, presents ravens with pearls in their beaks flying above a table laden with chapeaux disguised as feathered fruit baskets.

Frivolity is likewise no stranger at **BODUM** (413-415 W. 14th St.; 800-232-6386), a vast new Scandinavian housewares store, though here it's firmly wedded to utility. The shop's credo is "good design should not be expensive," and, unlike a lot of other spots in the neighborhood, this is a place where you can spend a mere $2.95 on a tangerine paper-clip holder or $1.95 on a cerulean tape dispenser and go home happy. In addition to items guaranteed to brighten up the home office, there are plenty of things dedicated to doing the same for the kitchen. The shop takes a pedagogical approach to the art of making coffee and tea, even if one of its instructional brochures quotes Mick Jagger, who had famously nasty habits and took tea at three. About half a century ago, the owner's father imported a vacuum coffee maker from France to the Danish market; unhappy with its price and quality, he set to work adding his own refinements. A recently issued, electrified version of the senior Bodum's wildly successful Santos pot took a thousand hours to create, and, according to Carsten Jørgensen, the company's head of design, not a day went by that he didn't exhort his fellow-workers, "If it isn't functional, it isn't beautiful; if it isn't beautiful, it isn't functional."

—*Lynn Yaeger*

MARCELLUS HALL

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through Nov. 4) has, over the course of a decade, transformed himself into an indispensible element of the New York City jazz scene. The flying digits are still in grand shape, as is Chestnut's pithy way with a tune. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—Some artists were not meant for retrospectives. In the case of Paul Signac (1863-1935), an acolyte and understudy of Georges Seurat, faint praise would have been more flattering. The young Signac, a determined avant-gardist of middling talent, hitched himself to Seurat's star in 1884. From then on, he served as cheerleader for their willfully formulaic style. Signac's own Pointillist efforts, especially the placid harbor scenes of the eighteen-nineties, have an appealing kind of stippled, calming brightness. But the artist's twin passions (he was an avid yachtsman and a sentimental anarchist) don't resonate much today, and the later paintings show him gradually growing tired of the method he had done so much to promote. Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Drawings and Prints."** Fifty of Bruegel's sixty-one known drawings, many of them paired with the engravings (by other talented hands) for which they were designs, range from acutely poetic landscapes to surreal fantasies that were influenced by Hieronymous Bosch. While taking the dimmest possible views of human character, he embraced raw human energy with a zest that feels all-forgiving. His landscapes comprehend the grandeur and the scraggliness of nature in equal measure. Through Dec. 2. ♦ For **"Caspar David Friedrich: Moonwatchers,"** the Met presents seventeen paintings and two works on paper, many of which ("Two Men Contemplating the Moon," "Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon," etc.) capture the German artist at his most Romantic. Through Nov. 11. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

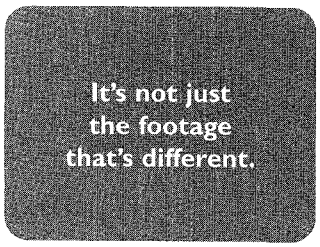
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—An Alberto Giacometti retrospective reacquaints us with the Swiss sculptor's iconic skinny statues while emphasizing his paintings and his less esteemed Surrealist objects of the nineteen-thirties. Revision is not achieved. Except for "The Palace at 4 A.M." and "Woman with Her Throat Cut"—two 1932 marvels that bespeak bolt-from-the-blue inspiration like that of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan"—the objects show Giacometti in a weakly pandering mode. The paintings, mostly portraits from the nineteen-fifties, expend obsessive energy to visually skimpy ends. But the great statues are more engaging than ever. These tragicomic presences don't so much stand in the world as stand up to it, ravaged by the very space around them but maintaining vestigial subjectivity in the thrust of a chin, the tilt of a hip, and the set of a shoulder—calling to the heart. Through Jan. 8. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, *10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.*)

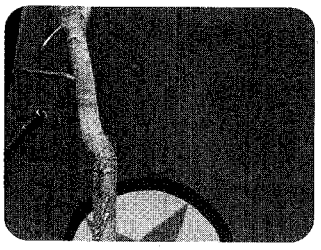
GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—For **"Brazil: Body & Soul"** the Thomas Krens team has gone to new extremes, utterly transforming the museum and leaving one awed by the mega-exhibition's scope, design, audacity, and cost. Under the direction of Jean Nouvel, the entire interior has been painted black, and the rotunda is now a Stygian theatre, with a massive four-story baroque altarpiece in its center. From there, viewers ascend past ranks of polychromed Madonnas, carved lions, ex-votos, and tribal videos and arrive, finally, at a celestial ring of white rooms, where the baroque (which lasted nearly three centuries in Brazil) abruptly gives way to modernism. After so much blood and gold, the twentieth century's primary colors are both a relief and a disappointment (the change is like stepping from purgatory to play school). In both sections, masterpieces are scarce: judging by this survey, Brazilians, like Guggenheim curators, prefer spectacle to refinement. Through Jan. 27. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

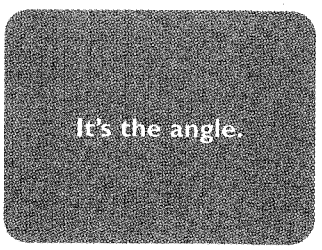
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—**"Sharon Harper: Photographs from the Floating World"** includes black-and-white images of rural scenes taken from a high-speed train, as well as images of clouds in metallic tones. The exhibition inaugurates the Whitney's "First Exposure" series, dedicated to the museum débuts of young photographers. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. (873-3400)—**"Manhattan Unfurled"** matches great panoramas of the New York skyline—the artist Edward Burkhardt's 360-degree views, from the eighteen-forties, and the architect Matteo Pericoli's perimeter views of the entire city from the Hudson and the East Rivers, a project he worked on from 1995 to 2000. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—The Canadian artist Janet Cardiff is best known for site-specific audio works created in collaboration with George Bures Miller, guided walks in which viewers (make that listeners) don headphones and follow the artist's instructions in a sort of aural treasure hunt. This mid-career retrospective features an eleven-minute journey through P.S. 1 and also includes soundtracks of tours past—a Swedish castle, a German street, a library in Pittsburgh—which can be heard while seated at a desk. (The walking experience is better). The show, which also includes a number of video-based works, culminates in the première of a stunning audio installation of a forty-part choral work by Thomas Tallis, composed in 1575. Through Jan. 20. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)







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GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

DAVID HOCKNEY AND HENRI MATISSE
This delightful collection of ink, pencil, and charcoal portraits casts the Yorkshireman and the Frenchman together in a fresh light. In the end though, the connection boils down to a single drawing. Hockney's 1984 ink portrait "Celia" obviously borrows the swooshy open contours of neighboring Matisse odalisques. But it feels like an impersonation, a one-off. Elsewhere, Hockney's amazing line—so attentive, lithe, economical—leaves no doubt about its provenance. Picasso is still the ghost in the Rapidograph. Through Nov. 10. (Artemis Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 445-0444.)

ELYN ZIMMERMAN
Private reveries in the form of drawings from an artist best known for public sculpture (her memorial to the victims of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing was destroyed in last month's tragedy). The black-and-white brush-and-ink works vary in scale and approach. In some, vigorous strokes yield dense obsidian fields, while others have a misty, atomized appearance. All evoke the play of light on water, with the bland, soothing effect of a tabletop fountain. Through Nov. 10. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313.)

Short List

WILLIAM BAZIOTES
Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888.
Through Nov. 3.

RAYMOND HAN
Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545.
Through Nov. 3.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

DIKE BLAIR
This epigrammatic exhibition of eight gouaches and two sculptures is so carefully installed it's the visual equivalent of haiku. The paintings, which could easily be mistaken for snapshots, are intimate in scale and melancholy in subject: a rain-streaked windshield, a stretch of empty sky seen from a window. But the assiduous simplicity you see in the paintings turns into fussiness in the sculptures, which feature arrangements of generic, everyday materials such as rolled carpeting, tangled cords, and light fixtures. Through Nov. 10. (Feature, 530 W. 25th St. 675-7772.)

JEREMY BLAKE
Blake is the most conspicuously gifted of current artists who use video-projected digital design to mimic abstract painting. In sixteen minutes (about how long it takes the three projections to recycle), Blake's projection wall gives you a world of rhythmically changing, ravishing geometric and color-fieldish motifs. Interspersed movie samples (a burning castle, a dancing woman) refer to a literary conceit spelled out in drawings: the tale of a crazy British architect who finds fulfillment in Malibu. This self-indulgent fantasy discourages viewers from taking Blake's formal project as seriously as it might seem to deserve. Through Nov. 24. (Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500.)

MORRIS LOUIS
Eight big stain pictures by the Washingtonian (1912-62) arrive in time for the current revival of interest in color-field painting, a movement that has been held in low esteem for too long. Louis was onto something with his plastic paints poured across raw canvas: a way of freely drawing with pure colors on a grand scale. At best, as with the roughly symmetrical dollops that flank an empty center in "Lambda II," the effect is as thrilling as trumpets in the morning. But not all or even many of Louis's ideas for exploiting the stain technique satisfy. The sheer variety of forced lyrical motifs betrays shaky conviction; the inventor seems a mite intimidated by his own invention. But even his failures re-create the dramatic intensity of abstract painting's last inning. Once a warm white, the forty-year-old cotton canvases have ripened to an elegiac beige. Through Nov. 24. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 26th St. 563-4474.)

THOMAS NOZKOWSKI
The Chardin of contemporary abstraction serves up more of his quirky late modernist nouvelle cuisine. Nozkowski's placemat-size compositions typically feature a few bright flat shapes, craftily tweaked to evade categorization. This season's menu includes a fresh range of fragmentary grids, maplike archipelagoes, and poached-egg nimbuses. All advertise Nozkowski's ingenuity, and most leave viewers with a memorable aftertaste—at once delectable, humorous, and baffling. Through Nov. 10. (Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999.)

ELIZABETH PEYTON
Peyton has become a leading contemporary artist by the lighter-than-air means of simply rendering photographs of friends, lovers, and selected celebrities. (Her heart goes out to vulnerable young royals and confused rock stars.) Her quick, tender, expert brush asserts that those whom she loves are lovable, as anyone can plainly see. Do her visions of pretty boys and girls somewhat evoke standard magazine looks? Her paintings and drawings about ordinary adoration form a counterattack to commercialized romance, reclaiming public emotional ground from fashionable affectation and returning it to personal affection. That's why her shows of off-handedly lovely little pictures feel seriously triumphant. Through Nov. 17. (Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258.)

RICHARD SERRA
More rusty, edifying grandeur. Having taught us the gritty joys of being loomed over by strangely shaped walls of glowering steel, Serra mounts a sombre fun park in which the walls form spirals—in homage to Tatlin's "Monument to the Third International" and Smithson's "Spiral Jetty," it seems—as well as famil-

"Para III" (1959), by Morris Louis, from his exhibition of poured paintings, at Kasmin.

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iar corridors and chambers. One two-sided, shiplike piece can't be entered—a first for Serra and oddly upsetting. A pair of oblong steel masses in separate rooms is titled, with galumphing wit, "Ali-Frazier." Serra is at the top of his game, whatever that is. It combines austere formal reason and brute physical stupefaction to vaguely hortatory effect. Here is public art for a big-shouldered social democracy. Through Dec. 15. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 741-1111.)

Short List

JAMES SIENA
Gorney Bravin & Lee, 534 W. 26th St., 352-8372. Through Nov. 10.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

KEITH SONNIER
Forget about naked Last Suppers and cross-sectioned cows: here's a show that takes shock value literally. Raw electrical current flows through sculptures inspired by the work of Nikola Tesla, a pioneer of high-voltage electricity, who died in destitute obscurity. In addition to an electrified fence (the grid has never looked more menacing), the show includes a "ladder" of electrical currents bouncing between a pair of copper rods. Black-and-yellow hazard tape keeps viewers out of harm's way, but the ear-splitting and heart-stopping crackle of voltage keeps the danger palpable. Through Nov. 28. (Location One, 26 Greene St. 334-3347.)

"ACADÉMIE MATISSE"
During the three years (1908-11) that he ran an art school in Paris, Henri Matisse taught Americans, Germans, Britons, and above all, Scandinavians (the French, apparently, stayed away). This fascinating small show, the first to gather works by Matisse's pupils alongside a few of his own, gives a sense of the school's Cézannesque pedagogy. As you might expect, color was at the top of the agenda—but so were traditional drawing skills. Many of the loosely Fauvist landscapes and portraits on view (by Henrik Sørenson, Per Krohg, Axel Revold, Jean Heiberg, and others) could nearly be mistaken for the Master's own. Through Nov. 17. (Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. 673-6466.)

Short List

CATHERINE MURPHY
Lennon Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through Nov. 3.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Nov. 1-3 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Prints from the fifteenth century to the present. The collection of Mexican works belonging to Reba and Dave Williams (including one of twelve proofs of "Frida and the Miscarriage," Frida Kahlo's only foray into printmaking) is a highlight of this wide-ranging sale, which also includes prints by Gauguin, Piranesi, Jasper Johns ("The Seasons," a suite of four prints from 1987), and a broad selection of works by Escher and Picasso (including seventy-five lots of ceramics). ♦ Nov. 2 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Courbet's "Portrait de Jo, la Belle Irlandaise," a painting of Whistler's beautiful red-haired mistress Jo Heffernan which is estimated to bring more than a million dollars, is the highlight of an auction of nineteenth-century paintings and sculptures. Works by such artists as Millet, Bakst, and George Clausen ("The Harvest") are also featured. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
Oct. 31 at 10 A.M. and 2: Prints from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. ♦ Oct. 31 at 7: A single-owner sale of "Orientalist" paintings of the Islamic world by such artists as John Frederick Lewis ("The Bezestein Bazaar of El Khan Khalil, Cairo," estimated to sell for up to three million dollars) and Jean-Léon Gérôme. ♦ Nov. 1 at 10 A.M.: Nineteenth-century paintings. ♦ Nov. 6 at 7: Impressionist and modern art. Leading the sale is a group of twenty-five paintings valued at approximately forty million dollars. The collection, which will be sold to benefit UNICEF, belonged to the late Belgian businessman René Gaffé and includes works by Miró, Léger, and Picasso ("Étude pour 'Nu dans une Fôret,'" from 1908, originally owned by Gertrude Stein). Among the lots from various owners is Klimt's early landscape "Bauernhaus mit Birken," recently restored to its pre-Second World War owners by the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere in Vienna. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

CHRISTIE'S EAST
Nov. 6 at 1: Impressionist and modern art works. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

DOYLE
Oct. 31 at 10 A.M.: Furniture, paintings, and decorations. ♦ Nov. 6 at 10 A.M.: American furniture, decorations, paintings, and prints from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

PHILLIPS
Nov. 5 at 11 A.M.: The house offers the Hoener collection of modern German art. Works by the artists of the Dresden movement Die Brücke dominate the collection, which includes paintings, drawings, and sculptures by such artists as Nolde, Macke, and Schmidt-Rottluff ("Die Lesende," from 1911), along with Dadaist and Surrealist works by Schwitters and Ernst. ♦ Nov. 5 at 7: Paintings, drawings, and sculptures formerly belonging to the late Los Angeles collectors Marion and Nathan Smooke. Works by Matisse, Picasso (including "Skull, Leeks, and Pot," from 1945), Kirchner, and Modigliani are featured in the sale. (3 W. 57th St. 570-4830.)

SWANN
Nov. 1 at 10:30 A.M.: Autographs from leading figures in politics, military history, and the arts, including Abraham Lincoln, Richard Wagner, Winslow Homer, Emily Dickinson, and George Washington (a wartime letter to the governor of Rhode Island, estimated to sell for approximately thirty thousand dollars). ♦ Nov. 5 at 10:30 A.M. and 2:30: Prints from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, including work by Callot, Hassam, and Chagall ("Angel Bay with Bouquet of Roses," from 1967). (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

Olli Mustonen plays with the New York Philharmonic on Nov. 1-2 and Nov. 6.

INTERNATIONAL PRINT FAIR
The eleventh annual dealers' exhibition of fine-art prints from galleries around the world. (Leyden Gardens Hotel, 215 E. 64th St. 759-4469. Nov. 1-3.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

NIKKI S. LEE
Finally, an heir to Cindy Sherman who captures the vitality of Sherman's early self-portraits. Lee, a young Korean woman just out of art school, stages and poses for faux candids, alone and at the center of snapshotlike images of groups, from strippers to schoolgirls to skateboard punks. She always seems completely engrossed in the casually close crowd scenes, whether with a cluster of Asian high-school girls gossiping or in a car full of African-American teen-agers arguing over which way to go. Viewers may be sorry to realize the intimacy is pure setup, or sorry to get Lee's point, that hairstyle, dress, and context are so much of who we are, but there's cheer in her virtuosic performances. Through Dec. 1. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 255-8450.)

SARAH MOON
Moon modelled briefly in the sixties, then moved to the other side of the camera in 1968. She exposes and develops her images so that their often-blurred subjects—frequently women, birds, and landscapes—float in a nocturnal-looking haze. Other photographers, like Joel Peter Witkin, have used similar techniques to produce prints that look deceptively like tintypes and daguerreotypes, but Moon's shadowy tones entice rather than deceive. Several color images in pigment prints are the candy of the show—one shows a raspberry-colored flower floating above a Windex-blue glass on a taxicab-yellow mat. Through Dec. 8. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 857-0000—**Helmut Newton** was most recently in the spotlight with the 2000 release of his sixty-six-pound book, "Sumo," which came with its own Philippe Starck table. He's back with this retrospective, curated by his wife. Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"The Construction of the Paris Opera: Photographs of Delmaet and Durandelle"** and **" 'Greed' and Other Recent Acquisitions"** will also be on show through Dec. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

DUANE MICHALS
Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Through Dec. 1.

JULIE MOOS
Freiser, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through Nov. 21.

BARBARA POLLACK
Esso, 211 W. 28th St. 560-9728. Through Nov. 24.

"HERE IS NEW YORK"
Here Is New York, 116 Prince St. 334-6684. Through Nov. 4.

See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Bellini's **"Norma,"** with Jane Eaglen (in the title role), Daniela Barcellona, and Richard Margison; Carlo Rizzi conducts. (Oct. 31 at 8.) ♦ With Antonio Barasorda replacing Margison. (Nov. 3 at 1:30. This is the final performance.) ♦ The first performances of the season of **"Madama Butterfly,"** with Fiorenza Cedolins, Jane Bunnell, Richard Margison, and Kim Josephson; Marco Armiliato. (Nov. 1 and Nov. 6 at 8.) ♦ **"La Bohème,"** with Patricia Racette, Inva Mula,

MICHAEL WITTE

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TABLES FOR TWO

AREZZO

46 W. 22nd St. (206-0555)—One night in late September, this small, sleek new Italian spot in the Flatiron district was filled to capacity with the sort of handsome, well-heeled diners who probably never cook but nonetheless have to eat. The food was fine, but nobody seemed to notice; people just fed themselves and went home. It was tempting to dismiss the place as just another chic dispensary for hearty, well-turned-out Tuscan food.

By late October, the stark ivory-on-white space somehow seemed a lot warmer than it had been before: huge arrangements of dark-green magnolia leaves and autumn flowers brushed the ceiling at the bar and near the roaring wood oven. On each table, a votive sat on a curl of brown kraft paper decorated with sprigs of leftover hydrangea and a few crab apples.

It's likely—considering that the chef is Margherita Aloi, late of Le Madri—that the lamb chops were no less perfectly done than they had been before, that the ravioli with Bolognese sauce had always been rich but delicate, and that the list of Italian wines had always been exceptional. But tonight, diners were actually savoring their meals. Platters arranged with fritto-misto sculptures and fragrant dishes of cavatelli in a hot-and-sweet-sausage ragù arrived at tables ahead of contrails of steam. A slightly sweet, brothy barley soup accompanied a pretty autumn salad of warm butternut squash and wild mushrooms tumbling out of a baby pumpkin. When that was gone, the waiters removed the plates and brought an olive-oil-scented, wood-roasted sea bass along with a Florentine rib eye: crunchy black on the outside, deep red in the middle, and big enough to feed the Flintstones.

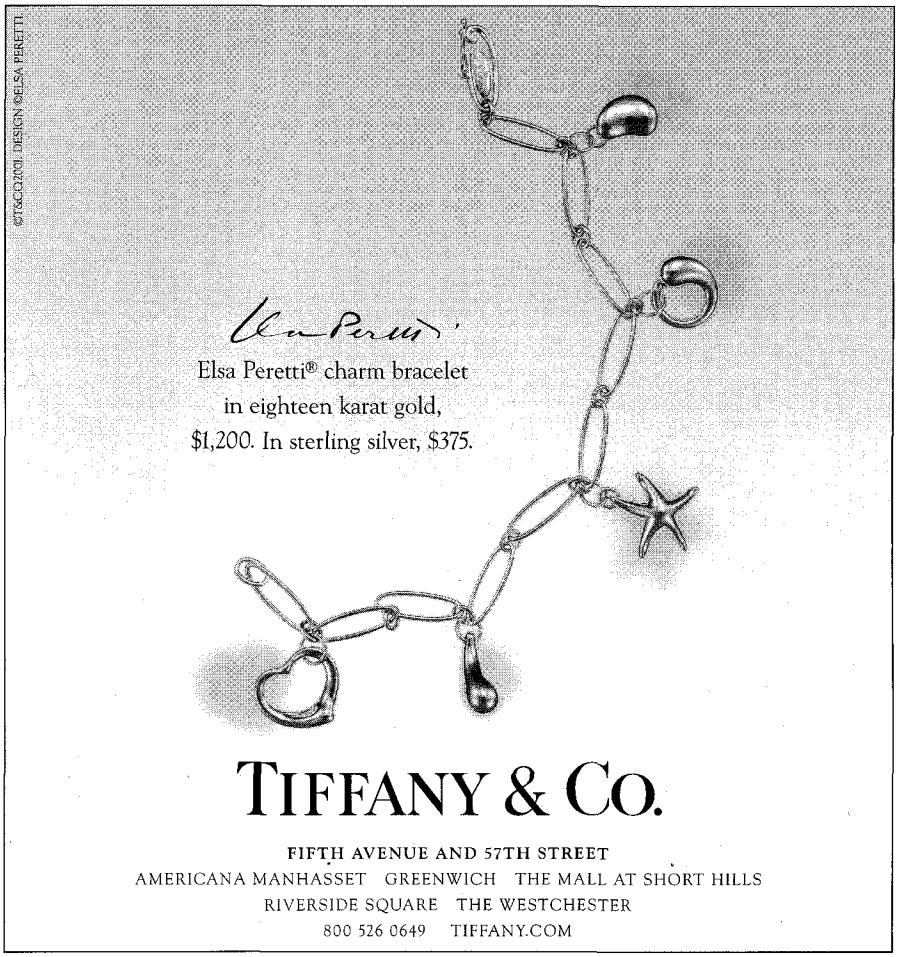
The crowd was a force of nature, too. In one corner was a man with a laugh like a foghorn. In another was a table of twelve men who looked like a benevolent fraternity; the ringleader ordered what seemed like a taste of everything on the menu for the group. When the food came, the men raised their glasses, and a woman at the next table wondered aloud what they were celebrating. The one who had done the ordering turned around, thought about it for a minute, and said, "Being alive." Then they began to eat. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $18-$35.)

—Emily Nunn

Ramón Vargas, and Bruno Caproni; Carlo Rizzi. (Nov. 2 at 8.) ♦ James Levine conducts Verdi's **"Luisa Miller,"** in a new production by Elijah Moshinsky with sets and costumes by Santo Loquasto. Marina Mescheriakova, Denyce Graves, Neil Shicoff, Nikolai Putilin, Hao Jiang Tian, and Phillip Ens take the leading roles. (Nov. 3 at 8.) ♦ **"La Traviata"** returns to the schedule, with June Anderson, Vinson Cole, and Juan Pons; Maurizio Benini. (Nov. 5 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA

James Robinson's production of **"La Bohème"**—a leaner, more daring treatment than the Met's—returns from last season, with Maria Kanyova, Alexandra Coku, Misha Didyk, and Frank Hernandez (a début); conducted by Brent McMunn. (Oct. 31 at 7:30.) ♦ With Theresa Santiago, Adina Aaron, and Barton Green replacing Kanyova, Coku, and Didyk. (Nov. 2 at 8.) ♦ A new production of Monteverdi's **"The Return of Ulysses,"** directed by John Cox, with Phyllis Pancella, Katharine Goeldner, Stephen Powell, and David Adams; Daniel Beckwith. (Nov. 1 at 7:30 and Nov. 4 at 1:30.) ♦ The first performance this season of **"Turandot,"** with Nina Warren, Oksana Krovytska, Carl Tanner, and David Michael; George Manahan. (Nov. 3 at 1:30.) ♦ **"The Magic Flute,"** performed in English, with Alexan-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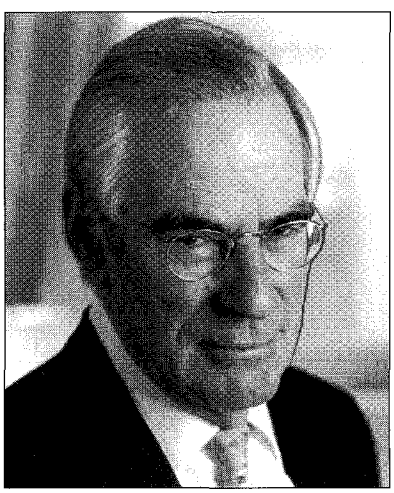
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dra Coku, Helen Todd, David Adams, Kevin Burdette, John Marcus Bindel, and Joel Sorensen; Steven Mosteller. (Nov. 3 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 307-4100.)

AMATO OPERA
The chamber company presents **"Tosca,"** directed and conducted by Anthony Amato. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery. 228-8200. Nov. 3 at 7:30 and Nov. 4 at 2:30. Through Nov. 25.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Kurt Masur conducts a program saluting the art of the composer-performer. Liszt, Prokofiev, and Rachmaninoff are represented, respectively, by "Les Préludes," the "Scythian Suite" and the "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" (the soloist in the latter is another composer-pianist, the young Finnish virtuoso Olli Mustonen, making his Philharmonic début). The soprano Susan Botti (in another début), a professor of composition at the University of Michigan, premières her song cycle "EchoTempo," settings of American Indian poetry. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Nov. 1 at 8, Nov. 2 at 2, and Nov. 6 at 7:30.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY
Nov. 1 at 8: A colleague of the prolific Seattle composer Alan Hovhaness, who died last year at eighty-nine, affectionately described him as a man "from a small planet where it is always Christmas and where there are no bad sounds." His music—life-affirming to some, simpleminded to others—is sonorous, mystical, and richly melodic, embracing the traditions of Armenia and Asia as much as it revels in the complexities of Western counterpoint. Gerard Schwarz, one of his biggest fans, conducts a concert in celebration of Hovhaness's life and work, featuring his Concerto for Harp and Strings, Op. 267 (with Yolanda Kondonassis), and his Symphony No. 50, "Mount St. Helens." ♦ Nov. 3 at 8 and Nov. 4 at 2: The orchestra officially opens its twenty-fifth-anniversary season with an exceptionally varied program of Beethoven (the "Emperor" Concerto, with the pianist Horacio Gutierrez), Honegger, Mahler, and Hugh Aitken (the première of "Songs and Caprices"). (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500.)

NETHERLANDS CHAMBER CHOIR
Miller Theatre's "Opulent Music" series is an exploration of the strain of musical decadence that arose from the French and Russian composers of a century ago. In that spirit, the choir presents music by Debussy, Poulenc (the scintillating "Sept Chansons"), Messiaen ("Cinq Rechants"), and others. (Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 3 at 7.)

RECITALS

EVGENY KISSIN
Hearing Mussorgsky's original "Pictures at an Exhibition," in all its granitic Russian glory, is a healthy corrective to Ravel's sumptuous version for orchestra. Kissin, a fiery pianist in the bravura tradition, performs it at Carnegie Hall along with music by Schumann and Bach (arranged by Busoni). (247-7800. Oct. 31 at 7:30.)

MUSIC AT COOPER UNION
Oct. 31 at 7:30: The soprano Elizabeth Farnum, the clarinettist Todd Palmer, and the pianist Scott Dunn première Ricky Ian Gordon's "Orpheus & Euridice," a modern treatment of the timeless legend. ♦ Nov. 3 at 7:30: Alexander Blachly directs the vocal ensemble Pomerium in a program of works by Guillaume Du Fay. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. 279-4200.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Oct. 31 at 8: Edgar Meyer, a bassist whose virtuosity extends well outside the classical mainstream, presents a concert of classical, jazz, and bluegrass pieces with the banjo player Béla Fleck. ♦ Nov. 4 at 5: Peter Serkin performs the complete solo piano music of Schoenberg, along with Haydn's Andante with Variations in F Minor. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5788.)

BARGEMUSIC
Nov. 1 and Nov. 3 at 7:30: Bargemusic goes early music, hosting Les Voix Humaines (which includes the lutenist Sylvain Bergeron and the countertenor Daniel Taylor). Their program, "Flow My Tears," features music by Dowland, Purcell, and Byrd. ♦ Nov. 2 at 7:30 and Nov. 4 at 4: Carmit Zori, Robert Rinehart, and Fred Sherry play trios for violin, viola, and cello by Schubert, Webern, and Beethoven (the taut and dramatic String Trio in C Minor). ♦ **Note:** Bargemusic starts its second season of children's concerts on Nov. 3 at 2, with Zori, Rinehart, and Sherry playing a program of music for kids ages six through twelve. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

MUSIC AT WEILL RECITAL HALL
Two young American string quartets make their débuts at Carnegie Hall's chamber venue. Nov. 1 at 8: The Fry Street Quartet performs music by Haydn, Janáček (the "Kreutzer Sonata" quartet, based on Tolstoy), and Beethoven. ♦ Nov. 2 at 8: The Johannes Quartet presents works by Haydn, Debussy, and Mendelssohn. (247-7800.)

SUSANNE MENTZER: "WOMEN IN LOVE"
In the classic art-song repertory, the feelings of women have been idealized and interpreted by generations of male composers. In this program, the mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, accompanied by Craig Rutenberg, lets three important women composers—Alma Mahler, Clara Schumann, and Libby Larsen—tell their side of the story. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 590-0333. Nov. 2 at 6:30.)

PAULA ROBISON: "RIO NIGHTS"
Music from Rio de Janeiro is the focus of the flutist's latest program, a concert of Bach, Villa-Lobos, and a generous selection of choros, sambas, and other Brazilian sounds. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 3 at 7.)

LUKAS FOSS
The pianist and composer, a robust presence on the American scene for more than half a century, performs music of his own (including the picaresque "Three American Pieces") along with Schumann's Piano Quintet, with the chamber ensemble Elysium, the mezzo-soprano Rosemary Alvino, and the New York Philharmonic clarinettist Mark Nuccio. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 4 at 8:30.)

CHRISTOPH GENZ
The young German tenor, with the pianist Wolfram Rieger, makes his North American recital début with an all-Schubert program. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St. 721-6500. Nov. 5 at 7:30.)

CLAREMONT TRIO
This piano trio, the first to win the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, makes its New York début with pieces by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. (92nd St. Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 307-6656. Nov. 6 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

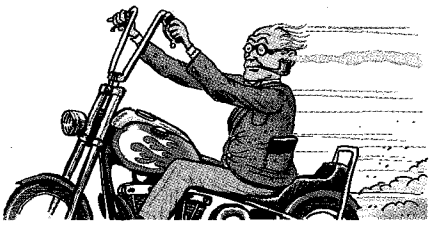
READINGS
Nov. 1 at 7: By Leah Kreger, from her documentary work in progress, "The Lives of Architects." (Spoonbill and Sugartown Booksellers, 218 Bedford Ave., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Nov. 5 at 7:30: By Mark Salzman, from his novel "Lying Awake." (Barnes & Noble, 240 E. 86th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Nov. 5 at 7:30: By Jordan Davis and Jeni Olin, from their poetry. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS
Oct. 31 at 8: The eloquent neurologist Oliver Sacks discusses his work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500.) ♦ Nov. 1 at 6:30: John Tauranac, who designed the official New York City subway map in 1979, talks about mapping mass transit. (Wollman Auditorium, Cooper Union, 51 Astor Pl. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Nov. 1 at 7:30: The writer Francine Prose interviews the poet Charles Simic. (Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. For more information, call 254-9628.) ♦ Nov. 3 at 2:30: The art historian David Leopold offers an illustrated lecture on the Hollywood-related work of the illustrator Al Hirschfeld. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 534-1672.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Wheel Life

"There are a lot of good things in the biker world. That's why I get so displeased when people stereotype us as bad people," says a friend of Barbara Joans, an anthropologist and biker whose **BIKE LUST: HARLEYS, WOMEN, AND AMERICAN SOCIETY** (Wisconsin) investigates the place of women in this forbiddingly



masculine world. Joans finds that though stereotypical biker chicks do exist, they are outnumbered by women who just love zooming around on bikes. But the activity isn't always marked by sisterhood. "Once I was riding with a bunch of women, and they left without me," one female biker says.

Another anthropologist, Jill Dubisch, and Raymond Michalowski, a sociologist, have spent years as participant-observers of the Run for the Wall, an annual commemoration of the Vietnam dead, in which hundreds of bikers—some vets, some not—take part in a ride from Southern California to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. In **RUN FOR THE WALL: REMEMBERING VIETNAM ON A MOTORCYCLE PILGRIMAGE** (Rutgers), they view the Run as a modern, secular pilgrimage that helps to alleviate various kinds of pain. One vet puts it more simply and forlornly: "I ride my bike to stay sane. The last time they let me out of the loony bin, I got this bike."

There's also a spiritual dimension to Rich Remsberg's book **RIDERS FOR GOD: THE STORY OF A CHRISTIAN MOTORCYCLE GANG** (Illinois). Remsberg's eloquent photographs of the Unchained Gang, born-again Christians in Indiana, show them in leathers and patches, praying, taking communion, and blessing their bikes. Mary, a healer, considers the bike an invaluable tool: "One of my favorite places to pray," she says, "was on the motorcycle, buzzing down the road."

—*Leo Carey*

DOUG ALLEN

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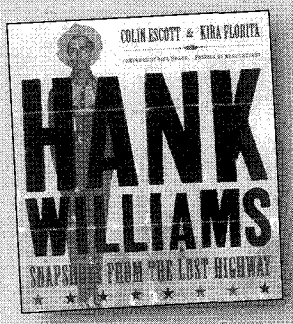
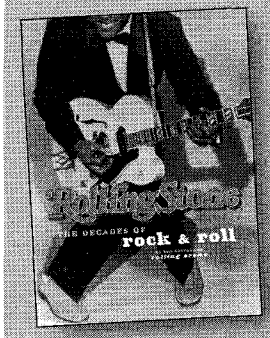
PHONOGRAPH



The real Hank Williams has proven an elusive figure to fans and biographers alike. With a wealth of never-before seen letters, photographs and the handwritten lyrics to nearly 30 lost songs, this tribute book is a revelation.

HANK WILLIAMS: SNAPSHOTS FROM THE LOST HIGHWAY
by Colin Escott & Kira Florita
Pub. Price: $35.00
Our Price: $28.00
Readers' Advantage Price: $25.20

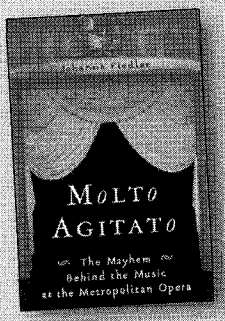
FUNK



Drawing on the vast archives of rock and roll's official chronicler, this hip survey of interviews, articles and photography replays some of the greatest historic moments in everything from R&B and rap to punk and grunge.

ROLLING STONE: THE DECADES OF ROCK & ROLL
by the editors of Rolling Stone
Pub. Price: $29.95
Our Price: $23.96
Readers' Advantage Price: $21.56

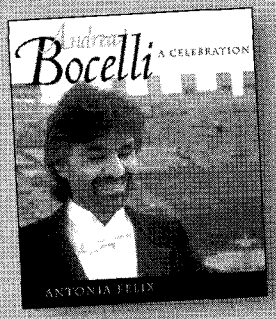
FRENETIC



Passions run high behind the golden curtain of the Metropolitan Opera House. Johanna Fiedler offers a dramatic look at the personalities, ambitions and politics that drive this revered institution.

MOLTO AGITATO
by Johanna Fiedler
Pub. Price: $30.00
Our Price: $24.00
Readers' Advantage Price: $21.60

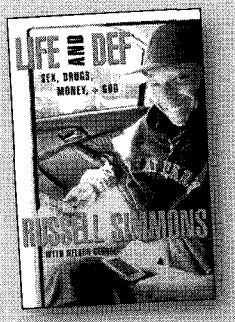
PHENOMENON



With over 30 million recordings sold, Andrea Bocelli is one of the most beloved musicians of our time. This illustrated biography of the celebrated tenor includes personal photographs and reflections from friends and family.

ANDREA BOCELLI: A CELEBRATION
by Antonia Felix
Pub. Price: $17.95
Our Price: $14.36
Readers' Advantage Price: $12.92

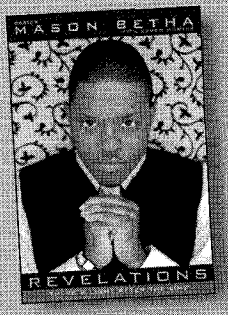
PHAT



Boasting an empire that includes Def Jam Records and the Phat Farm clothing line, Russell Simmons is the ultimate hip hop mogul. In Simmons' streetwise voice, *Life and Def* tells the tale of his life and the culture he helped create.

LIFE AND DEF
by Russell Simmons with Nelson George
Pub. Price: $24.00
Our Price: $19.20
Readers' Advantage Price: $17.28

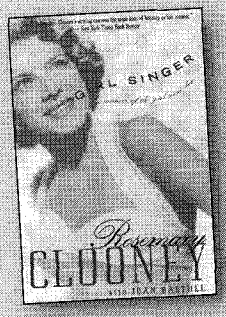
FAITH



A multi-platinum player in the hip hop world, Mason Betha lived the high life as the rapping and producing wizard behind Puffy's greatest hits. And then one day he left behind the glitz and glam to walk with God. This is his inspiring story.

REVELATIONS
by Mason Betha with Karen Hunter
Pub. Price: $22.00
Our Price: $17.60
Readers' Advantage Price: $15.84

FEMALE



Now in paperback, the autobiography of legendary Rosemary Clooney shares her memories from a remarkable career spanning a half century in American popular music, as well as a turbulent life with a happy ending.

GIRL SINGER
by Rosemary Clooney with Joan Barthel
Pub. Price: $14.95
Our Price: $11.96
Readers' Advantage Price: $10.76

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MOVIES OPENING

AMÉLIE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 2.

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE
John Travolta plays a boat builder who protects his son from a menacing stepfather (Vince Vaughn) in a thriller directed by Harold Becker. Opening Nov. 2.

HAPPENSTANCE
An ensemble comedy directed by Laurent Firode about the way coincidences shape our lives. With Audrey Tautou. In French. Opening Nov. 2.

LAST PARTY 2000
Philip Seymour Hoffman serves as a tour guide for last year's Republican and Democratic Conventions in a documentary directed by Donovan Leitch and Rebecca Chaiklin. Opening Nov. 2. (The Screening Room.)

THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 31.

MONSTERS, INC.
An animated movie from Pixar ("Toy Story") about the secret world of monsters who hide under children's beds and inside their closets. Voices by John Goodman, Billy Crystal, and Jennifer Tilly. Opening Nov. 2.

THE ONE
James Wong ("Final Destination") directed this science-fiction movie in which Jet Li does battle with an evil version of himself in parallel universes. Opening Nov. 2.

PUNKS
A comedy set in West Hollywood about the lives of four African-American gay men. Patrik-Ian Polk directed. Opening Nov. 2.

TAPE
Uma Thurman, Ethan Hawke, and Robert Sean Leonard play three twentysomethings who confront an unresolved incident from their high-school days. Richard Linklater directed. Opening Nov. 2.

FILM NOTES

THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT
Cory McAbee's black-and-white feature début (which he wrote, directed, and stars in) has the quirky kick of a budget-impaired independent film. The story, set in the future, tells of a shipping contractor chased by a deranged killer, but it's just an occasion for McAbee to run wild with his genre-busting ideas. The film is filled with psychotic Astaire-style musical sequences, Three Stooges-esque humor, slimy nightmare imagery, and hilarious Flash Gordon-inspired space scenes. The strange brew may not be to everyone's taste, but there's no mistaking the original and talented point of view McAbee brings to his grab-bag adventure.—*Bruce Diones* (Village East Cinemas.)

BANDITS
Bruce Willis as a macho daredevil with thinning long hair and an impassively cool manner; Billy Bob Thornton as a fussbudget hypochondriac who squints and starts and hears bells ringing in his head. They work together as polite, nonviolent bank robbers. But why? God knows we're willing to be amused, but the picture needs a bit more reality in order for us to accept it as a fiction. Some of Billy Bob's tremors are funny, but we never understand what holds these two together. The director, Barry Levinson, wants to cross "Bonnie and Clyde" with "It Happened One Night," but the combination doesn't work. He also makes frequent intercuts to a droning TV news show about the bank robbers, a device that kills the movie's momentum every time. With Cate Blanchett as the madcap married woman who throws in her lot with the two men.—*David Denby* (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

CHOP SUEY
Bruce Weber's new picture plays like a home movie filled with his particular pleasures and friends: the hip jazz singer Frances Faye, the jujitsu master Rickson Gracie, and Diana Vreeland, among others. He gives them all room to speak and entertain in the kindest of environments (Vreeland in her opulent apartment, Gracie with his family on the lawn). At the movie's center is the handsome, gap-toothed Peter Johnson, a high-school wrestler whom Weber discovered in Iowa and has been photographing obsessively over the last few years. Weber captures Johnson's adventurousness and innocence with such gentleness and humor that the film, and its myriad subjects, come together to form a deeply personal joyride.—*B.D.* (Film Forum.)

DINNER RUSH
A modestly scaled independent film about a long, long evening of cooking, eating, intrigue, hustle, sex, and murder at a Tribeca trattoria. The movie, well directed by Bob Giraldi, is made up of many little vignettes, most of them incisively written by the team of Rick Shaughnessy and Brian Kalata. Danny Aiello plays the tough-old-pro owner who may give up the place to his son (Edoardo Ballerini), a brilliant chef who has turned the family restaurant into something very chic. With Kirk Acevedo as a compulsive gambler who works as a sous-chef, Sandra Bernhard as a food writer in a wig, and many others. The movie was shot at Gigino, an actual restaurant that Giraldi owns.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/1/01.) (Murray Hill Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

DON'T SAY A WORD
Vicious jewel thieves kidnap a smart little girl; her father, a master psychiatrist (Michael Douglas), must wrest a certain bit of information that the thieves want from a young woman (Brittany Murphy) who may or may not be crazy. Meanwhile, the psychiatrist's wife (Famke Janssen) lies in bed with a broken leg and fights off the gang with her crutch. All these not quite fascinating activities take place in an oppressive, gray-blue Manhattan and culminate in a violent fight that goes on forever in the semi-darkness of a graveyard. The movie's gravity is inane; nothing here works. Directed by Gary Fleder.—*D.D.* (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Union Square.)

ELEVATOR TO THE GALLOWS
Louis Malle's first movie—a 1957 thriller about an attempt at a perfect crime, made in a tense yet velvety style. Jeanne Moreau, who was to become famous the next year in Malle's second film, "The Lovers," is less expansive here; her sullen, sensual mask is just right for this limited but absorbing *policier,* set to Miles Davis's music. The picture has an unusual sense of control and balance, considering that the plot itself is third rate. The black-and-white cinematography is by Henri Decaë. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Florence Gould Hall; Nov. 6.)

THE ENDURANCE
A documentary about Sir Ernest Shackleton's 1914 Antarctic expedition—a triumph of human will, or, more literally, the ultimate example of sangfroid. Caroline Alexander wrote the concise narration and the director, George Butler, takes care to etch the awesome physical realities at the bottom of the world. His camera hovers inches above the frigid dark-blue waters and pans across a merciless horizon of frozen sea. Frank Hurley, the expedition's original documentarian, performed a small miracle by saving his photo negatives and film reels. The scenes he shot of the men exercising the Canadian sled dogs and working furiously to extract their trapped ship are the gem within the film's careful casing.—*Michael Agger* (Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, and 59th Street East Cinema.)

FAT GIRL
A pitiful title for this gnawing French film, directed by Catherine Breillat, about the love-hate relationship between two teen-age sisters—one beautiful, the other not—during a family summer vacation. For the most part, the film is an artful examination of first love and sexual awakenings, but the tender, quiet scenes have a restless play beneath them. There's a psychological tension to Breillat's neutral style, and she employs it in an unnerving way whether she's filming a graphic love scene, a long drive, or a short, sharp burst of violence. In French.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

FROM HELL
Allen and Albert Hughes trade in the mean streets of Los Angeles for those of London circa 1888. Their Jack the Ripper movie has its source in a graphic novel by Alan Moore, who delved into the architecture of Nicholas Hawksmoor, the rites of Freemasonry in Victorian England, and other subtexts in order to invent a plausible fiction of who the Ripper may have been. The Hughes brothers take this careful work and tart it up, making it over into a gruesome, blood-soaked spectacle. Johnny Depp, peering through his forelock, is Inspector Fred Abberline, a policeman who finds his suspects in opium dreams. This makes for nice visual montages—including some unforgettable pulsating red grapes—but little in the way of suspense. With Heather Graham, theoretically playing the Irish prostitute Mary Kelly.—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

INTIMACY
Jay (Mark Rylance) and Claire (Kerry Fox) meet for sex every Wednesday in Jay's unfurnished London flat. Photographed in a ghostly light, the two grapple silently; their lovemaking is more about hunger and release than pleasure. The director Patrice Chéreau, adapting stories by Hanif Kureishi, seems to be attempting a generational portrait of Londoners in their thirties who are not quite gifted or single-minded enough to fulfill their dreams—failed musicians, painters, and actors who have drifted into wretchedness and bickering. The movie has some fine moods of bafflement and rage, but much of it is garbled and rather vague. The camera, right on top of the actors, seems to be chasing something that it can't find. With Timothy Spall as Claire's faithful husband, by far the most fully created character in the movie.—*D.D.* (10/29/01) (Angelika Film Center and Sutton 1 and 2.)

IRON MONKEY
This satisfying kung-fu flick from the action choreographer Yuen Woo Ping dates from 1993, before his work on "The Matrix," and the fights are less stylized, with more direct hand-to-hand combat and gymnastics. Dr. Yang (Yu Ruan-Guang), a mild-mannered herbalist, moonlights as the title character, a Robin Hood of rural China. It's amusing, during the slow humor scenes, to add up the various arts, besides martial, in which he excels. They include calligraphy, acupuncture, meditation, and cooking: when Dr. Yang slices noodles, he shoots them into a bowl from six feet away. In Mandarin.—*M.A.* (Astor Plaza, East 86th Street Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village Theatre VII.)

JOY RIDE
For the first half hour, John Dahl's latest movie is true to the joviality of its title. By the end, nothing could be more ironic, unless you think it is joyful to be locked in a motel room with a shotgun tied to the door handle. Dahl has a gift for unearthing laughter in the dark, and the new picture marks a welcome return to form. Steve Zahn and Paul Walker play a couple of brothers, driving across country with only a CB radio for entertainment. A practical joke goes badly wrong, and they become the terrified quarry

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of a man—or a voice—called Rusty Nail. The film belongs to Steve Zahn: his helpless tendency both to taunt the world and to cringe with dread at the consequences has never been put so smartly to the test.—*Anthony Lane* (10/8/01) (Empire 25.)

THE LAST CASTLE

A demagogic melodrama with James Gandolfini as the warden of a military prison who wears glasses and habitually listens to Mozart (obviously a very bad guy.) He tries to squelch an insurrection led by one of his prisoners (Robert Redford), a former three-star general with enough charisma to rouse a yardful of thugs without even lifting his voice. Too bad Redford conveys little authority in the role; military men aren't really within his range (he seems to be playing an international aid worker). The director, Rod Lurie, demonstrates a slick proficiency at manipulating easy emotions, and the American flag that he gloriously unfurls at the end should raise a lump in the national throat.—*D.D.* (10/29/01) (East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

L.I.E.

A delinquent kid (Paul Franklin Dano) first robs and then befriends a middle-aged ex-marine (Brian Cox), who knows a lucky chance when he sees one. As movie subjects go, pedophilia is volatile to the point of explosive, and Michael Cuesta has done well to hold his nerve and forge something so clever and careful. If anything, the cleverness cuts too deep. Cuesta's desire for tolerance is so pronounced, and Cox's skill is so generous and engaging, that, if you don't watch out, you can end up being seduced by the same strategic charm that ensnares the boy. This is Cox's film, by a mile; as a good Shakespearean, he knows how to flood villainy with dramatic life.—*A.L.* (9/10/01) (Cinema Village.)

LIFE AS A HOUSE

Kevin Kline gives a persuasive and ornery performance as a middle-aged failure who devotes himself to building a dream house on the golden cliffs of California. He plays an architect who doesn't think much of himself but is determined to follow his own path, and Kline's face is lit by anger in ways that we've never seen from him in movies. Much of the picture, until the tear-dripping conclusion, is charming. As the house goes up, various people drop in to saw a few boards, flirt, or make mischief. Kristin Scott Thomas, relaxing onscreen for the first time, plays George's rueful ex-wife. Hayden Christensen is his sixteen-year-old son—pierced, eye-shadowed, and drugged. The sunshiny cinematography is by Vilmos Zsigmond. Irwin Winkler directed.—*D.D.* (10/29/01) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

MIRACLE IN MILAN

Part social satire, part fantasy, this 1951 Vittorio De Sica film suggests a childlike view of Dostoyevsky's "The Idiot." A fun-loving old lady (Emma Gramatica) finds a newborn baby in a cabbage patch. The baby becomes Toto the Good (Francesco Golissano), the happy man who loves everyone; when he is frustrated in his desire to help people, the old lady, now an angel, comes down and gives him the power to work miracles. Toto the hero, naïve and full of love, organizes a hobo shantytown into an ideal community, but the social contradictions are ludicrously hopeless—not even magic powers can resolve them. The failure of innocence here is touchingly absurd; the film is stylized poetry, and it is like nothing else that De Sica ever did. In Italian.—*P.K.* (Anthology Film Archives; Nov. 2 and Nov. 4.)

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

A woman wanders away from a car wreck and into a strange house. Little old people scurry under the foot of a door, squeaking like mice. Yes, it's a David Lynch project. This one began life as a TV pilot; you can just imagine the aghast faces of the network executives as they saw what they had commissioned. In the event, the elongated weirdness, stretching to two and a half hours, feels discomfortingly at home on the larger screen; if you ever wanted to see an epic horror soap, this is what it would look like. Many established Lynch motifs are in place, most of them summoned from one corner or another of the nineteen-fifties: the innocent blonde (Naomi Watts), the baffled brunette (Laura Elena Harring), the clueless cop (Robert Forster). Addicts of the director will tie themselves in knots trying to pick the lock of the film; the rest of us can lie back and enjoy the spooking. With Justin Theroux and, as a tough old landlady, Ann Miller. Yes, *that* Ann Miller.—*A.L.* (10/8/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS

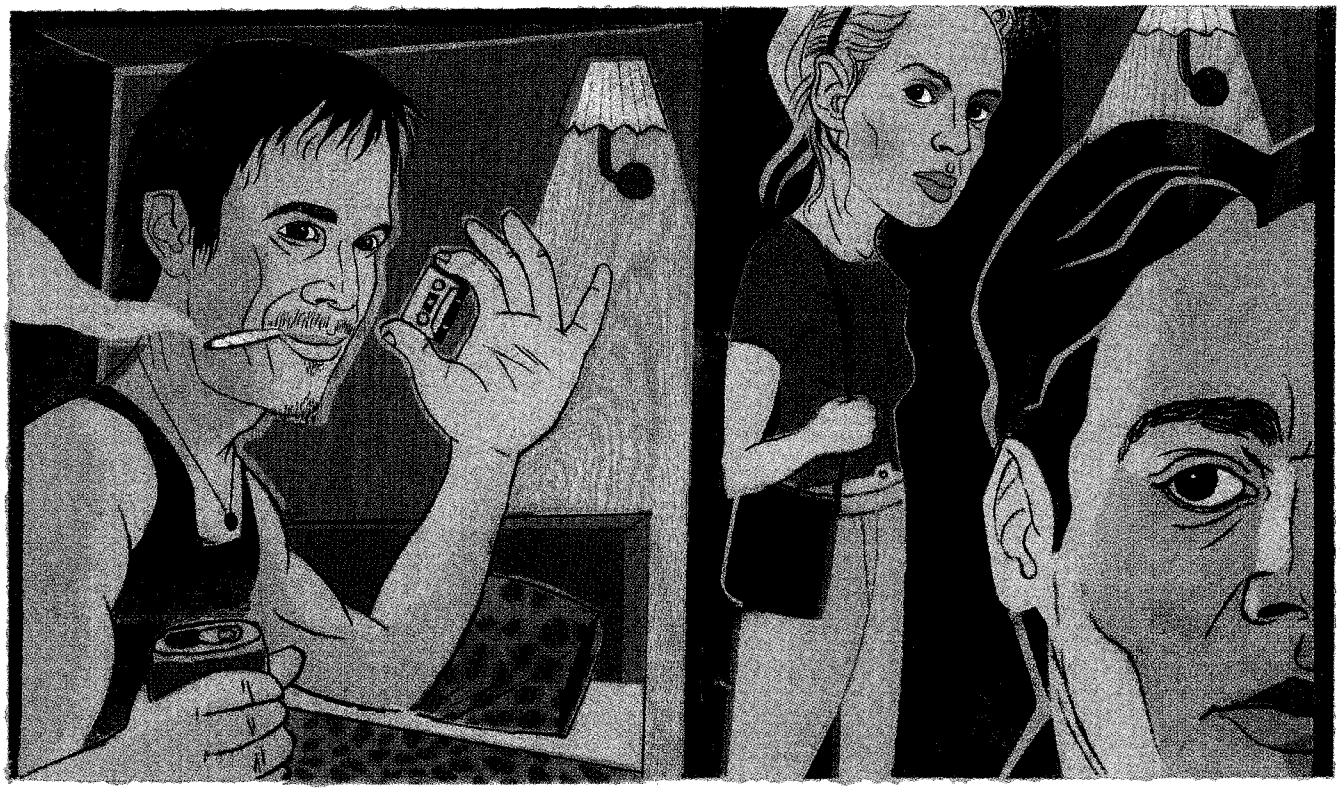
Beverly Donofrio's uncompromising memoir gets a semi-fictional makeover in the hands of the director Penny Marshall. The movie centers around Donofrio's ill-timed pregnancy at fifteen and how she copes with the frustrations of teen motherhood in her own not so pretty way. Drew Barrymore is never less than believable as she ages twenty years—raising a child, marrying the sweetly clueless father of her baby (Steve Zahn), and yearning for a better life. But it's the haunting performance by Zahn that gives the picture a surprisingly complex resonance.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

SERENDIPITY

Two consenting New York adults meet at Bloomingdale's during the Christmas season. He (John Cusack) takes Her (Kate Beckinsale) to Wollman Rink and proceeds to draw on her forearm with a pen, connecting her freckles to form the constellation Cassiopeia. She, wisely, proposes that they let fate decide whether or not they should be together. Cusack does his familiar woe-is-me loverboy shtick, and Beckinsale is full of charm and crispy vowels, but the real sparks are in the supporting performances, especially that of John Corbett as a musician boyfriend who's an unholy union of Kenny G and Yanni.—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

SPIES

Fritz Lang shows off his remarkable ability to direct like a kinetic architect in this pioneering 1928 espionage film from a script by his wife, Thea von Harbou. The story of a superagent (Willy Fritsch) who destroys a master criminal named Haghi (Rudolf Klein-Rogge) and saves a gorgeous Russian spy (Gerda Maurus) has slushy, ludicrous sequences. But Lang's precision and barrelling pace energize the hackneyed material, from the headlong opening montage of assassination and theft to the closing scene of Haghi trapped onstage doing a clown act—a bit that influenced Hitchcock.—*Michael Sragow* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Nov. 1.)



EDEL RODRIGUEZ

Opening November 2, Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, and Robert Sean Leonard in "Tape."

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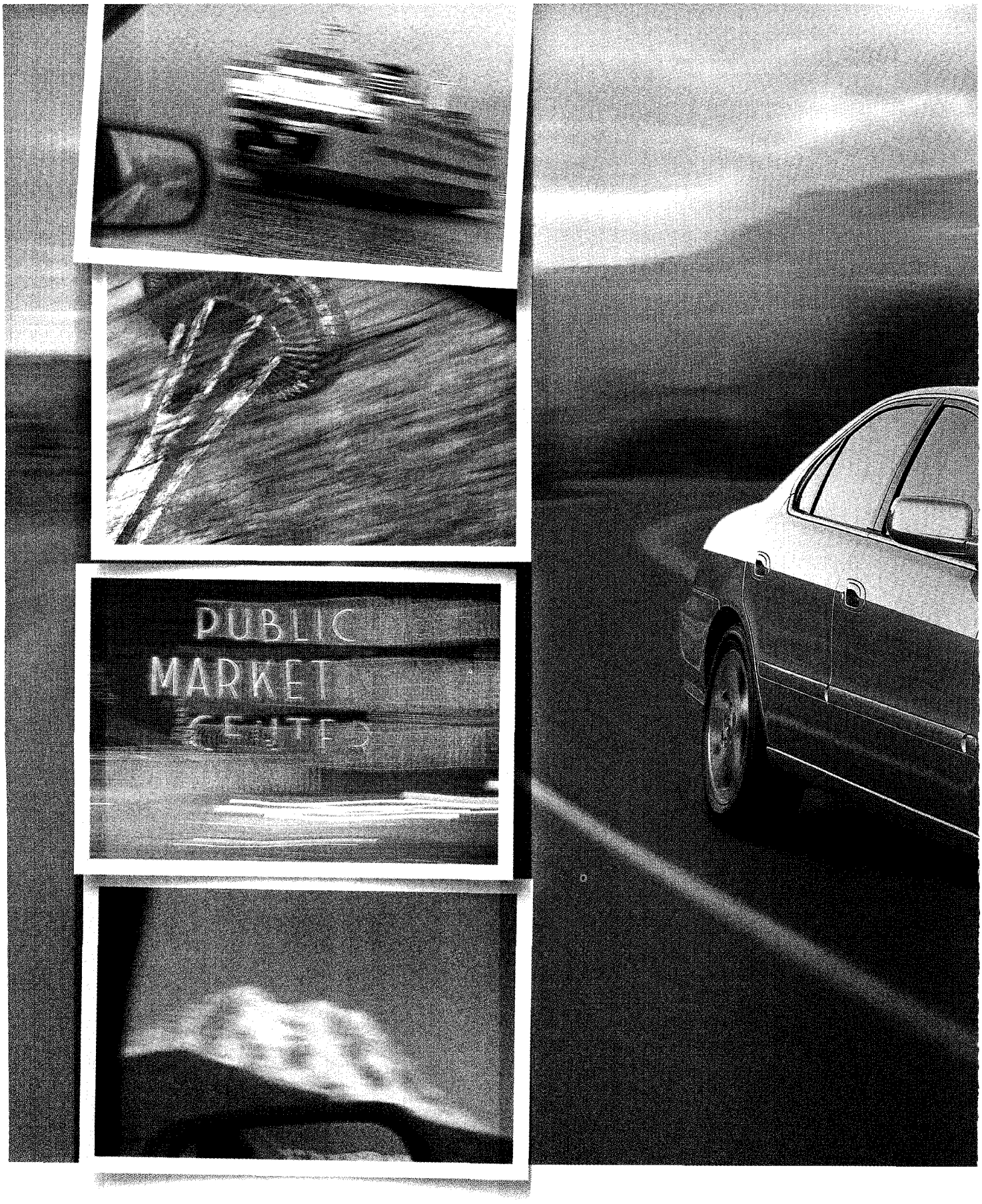

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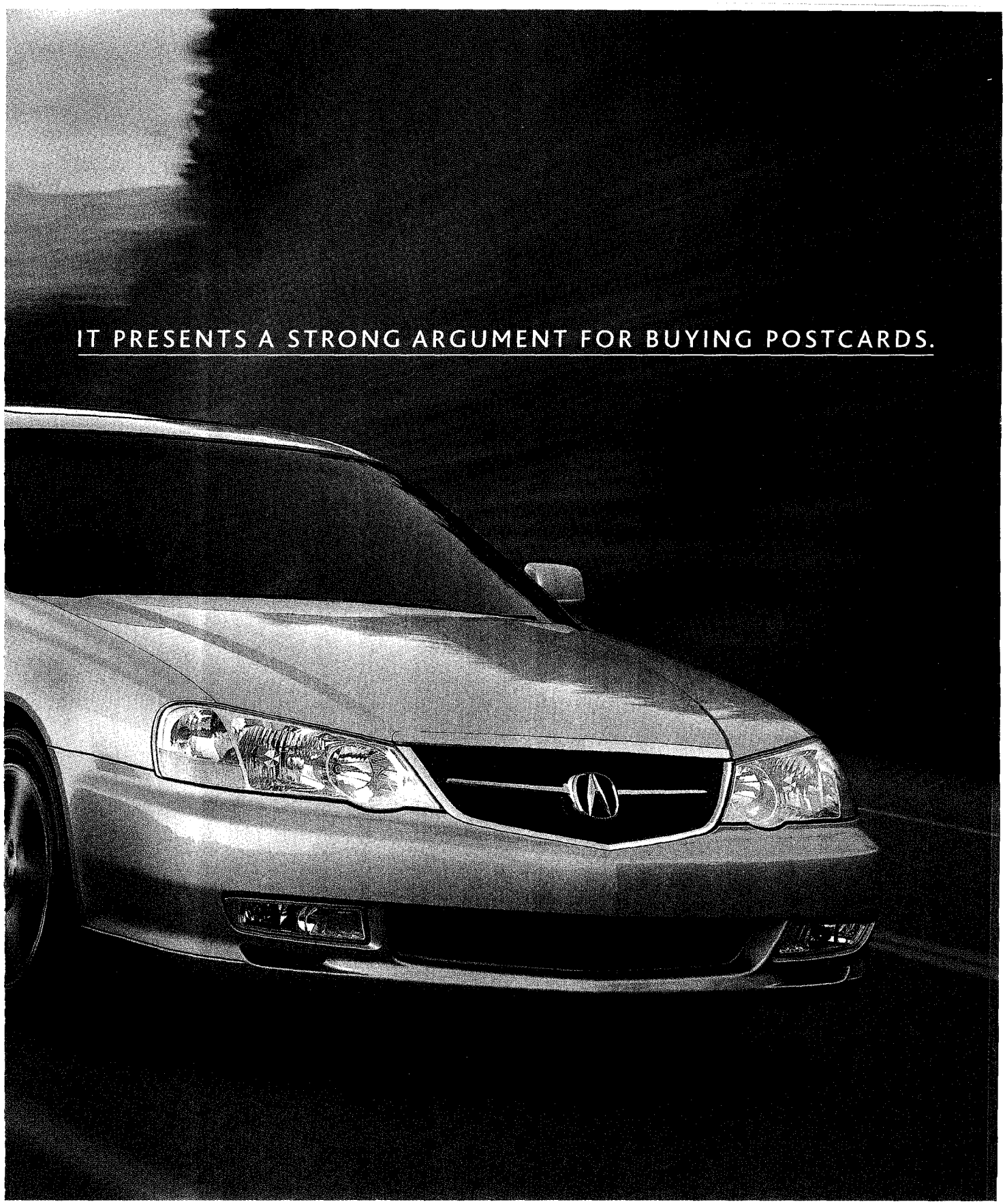

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TRAINING DAY
A synthetically plotted melodrama, but still it has power and depth. Denzel Washington is Alonzo Harris, a decorated Los Angeles narcotics cop who breaks in his new partner, Jake Hoyt (Ethan Hawke), a talented rookie from the Valley. Alonzo bullies and taunts the young man, teaching him the brutal wisdom of the street; Jake, who is highly moral, eager to impress, and ambitious, is hurt and baffled. It takes us a while to realize that what seem like random incidents on the street are really the outer edges of a malaise—the dishonesty of Alonzo and the other members of his undercover unit. Despite some trashy and conventionally violent scenes, the movie is psychologically interesting: the dominating and witty Alonzo wants the respect of the young man he's trying to corrupt. Washington is tormented and brilliant; it's his best performance so far.—*D.D.* (10/15/01) (Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

VA SAVOIR
Jacques Rivette directed this slow-moving and complicated romantic comedy that works the permutations of love and deceit to a fare-thee-well. In Paris, a visiting Italian theatre troupe puts on a Pirandello play (which we see at exhausting length). The leading lady (Jeanne Balibar), who is French, loves the Italian star and manager of the troupe (Sergio Castellitto) but pines for an old boyfriend, the Parisian philosophy professor (Jacques Bonaffé) she left behind three years ago. The Italian, meanwhile, looks for a lost Goldoni manuscript and begins a flirtation with a ravishing young blonde (Hélène de Fougerolles). There's more, much more, and eventually everyone connects with everyone else. The movie is absorbing—Castellitto is particularly charming—but surprisingly unresonant in memory, perhaps because the passions seem entirely theoretical. In French.—*D.D.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema Village, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

WAKING LIFE
A trip into uncharted territory from Richard Linklater, the director of "Dazed and Confused." More than ever, the title of that great movie sounds like a job description for all the Linklater characters still to come. The new picture is animated, although that word sounds too lively for the scores of people who amble through the frame, displaying just enough energy to talk. Maybe the director should have coined a new term for his technique—"shot in Slackerama" or something. The talkers are real people, filmed and then transmuted, on computer, into graphic form; you can, for instance, recognize Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke—lovers in another Linklater project—still lying in bed, as if their love were still alight. There is plenty of smart, incidental trickery: one woman's hair turns into snakes, like Medusa's, and an angry guy in jail glows as red as hellfire. If there is a problem here, it lies with the aimless drift of the conversation and dialogue. Is the look of the film not hip and fantastical enough, without any help from the script? Could such colorful invention not have used, dare one say, a plot?—*A.L.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Union Square.)

ZOOLANDER
Ben Stiller's comedy (he wrote, directed, and stars) is at best intermittently funny. He plays an empty-headed male model, and Owen Wilson is his stoned surf-boy rival. In their scenes together they generate a goofy comic energy, like the two most demented kids on the playground. Otherwise, the jokes are reheated (let this be the end of latte humor) and the scenes padded and overlong. The big joke—that fashion designers have formed a secret society to protect their sweatshop labor sources—seems severely misguided.—*M.A.* (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

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FOCUS
Cinema 3rd Avenue and Union Square.

K-PAX
Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.

13 GHOSTS
Chelsea West, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.

THE TOWN IS QUIET
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Union Square.

TREMBLING BEFORE G-D
Film Forum.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Nov. 18: "Shadow Play: Avant-Garde Views of Early Cinema." Nov. 3 at 2: "Dancers, Trains, and City Streets," a selection of films that depict urban scenes in the first decade of cinema combined with a discussion about how later avant-garde filmmakers used those images. ♦ Nov. 4 at 2: "Tom Tom the Piper's Son" (1969-71, Ken Jacobs). ♦ Nov. 4 at 4:30: A presentation of "Southwark Fair," in which Jacobs operates a two-projector system to create an "impossible world existing in a space between depth and flatness, past and present." ♦ Repertory nights. Nov. 3-4 at 6:30: "Rear Window" (1954, Alfred Hitchcock).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—The playwright Richard Foreman presents his favorite films. Nov. 2 at 7:30 and Nov. 4 at 4: "Miracle in Milan" (†). ♦ Nov. 2 at 9:30 and Nov. 3 at 4:30: "French Cancan" (1954, Jean Renoir; in French). ♦ Nov. 3 at 7:30 and Nov. 4 at 8: "The Condemned" (1991, Marco Bellocchio; in Italian). ♦ Nov. 3 at 9:30: "Strong Medicine" (1980, Richard Foreman). ♦ Nov. 4 at 6: "Big Wednesday" (1978, John Milius).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Oct. 31 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Phantom of the Paradise" (1972, Brian De Palma). ♦ Nov. 1 at 7:30: "Spies" (†). ♦ Nov. 2 at 3:30, 6:30, and 9:30: "Divided We Fall" (2001, Jan Hrebejk; in Czech). ♦ Nov. 3 at 2 and 6:30: "Loners" (2000, David Ondrícek; in Czech). ♦ Nov. 3 at 4:30 and 9:30: "Wildflowers" (2000, F. A. Brabec; in Czech). ♦ Nov. 4 at 2 and 6:50: "Angel Exit" (2000, Vladimír Michálek; in Czech). ♦ Nov. 4 at 4 and 9:30: "Buttoners" (1997, Petr Zelenka; in Czech). ♦ Nov. 5 at 6:50 and 9:10: A program of prewar American avant-garde films. ♦ Nov. 6 at 7:30: "Destiny" (1921, Fritz Lang), accompanied by live piano.

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 at 1, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, and 10:10: "Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton). ♦ Through Nov. 15: A Hal Ashby retrospective. Nov. 2-6 at 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, and 10: "Shampoo" (1975).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—A tribute to Jeanne Moreau. Nov. 6 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Elevator to the Gallows" (†).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Nov. 15: New films from Germany. Nov. 1 at 2: "To Moscow with IKEA" (2001, Michael Chauvistré). ♦ Nov. 1 at 4 and Nov. 3 at 2: "Lale Andersen—The Voice of Lili Marleen" (2001, Irene Langemann). ♦ Nov. 1 at 6 and Nov. 2 at 2:30: "The Tunnel" (2000, Roland Suso Richter). ♦ Nov. 2 at 6 and Nov. 4 at 12: "England!" (2000, Achim von Borries). ♦ Nov. 2 at 8 and Nov. 3 at 12: "Anna's Summer" (2001, Jeanine Meerapfel). ♦ Nov. 3 at 4: "Dirt for Dinner" (2000, Branwen Okpako). ♦ Nov. 4 at 2 and Nov. 5 at 4: "A Woman and a Half" (2001, Clarissa Ruge). ♦ Nov. 4 at 4: "Frost" (1998, Fred Kelemen). ♦ Nov. 5 at 2: "Dear Fidel—Marita's Story" (2000, Wilfried Huismann). ♦ Nov. 5 at 6: "Black Box Germany" (2001, Andres Veiel). ♦ Nov. 6 at 2:30: "The Loneliness of the Crocodiles" (2000, Jobst Oetzmann). ♦ Nov. 6 at 6: "Berlin Babylon" (2001, Hubertus Siegert).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Nov. 15: A tribute to *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Oct. 31 at 1 and 9:30: "Adieu Phillipine" (1963, Jacques Rozier; in French). ♦ Oct. 31 at 4:45: "Summer with Monika" (1953, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). ♦ Oct. 31 at 6:45: "Paris Belongs to Us" (1960, Jacques Rivette; in French). ♦ Nov. 1 at 1, 5:10, and 9:10: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French). ♦ Nov. 1 at 3 and 7: "The Girls" (1960, Claude Chabrol; in French). ♦ Nov. 2 at 1, 5:15, and 9:30: "My Night at Maud's" (1979, Eric Rohmer). ♦ Nov. 2 at 3:15 and 7:30: Three shorts from Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet. ♦ Nov. 3 at 2 and 6:30 and Nov. 4 at 4:30: "Antonio das Mortes" (1968, Glauber Rocha; in Portuguese). ♦ Nov. 3 at 4 and 8:30 and Nov. 4 at 2: "Death by Hanging" (1968, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese). ♦ Nov. 4 at 6:30 and Nov. 6 at 6: "Moi, Pierre Rivière, Ayant Égorgé Ma Mère, Ma Soeur et Mon Frère . . ." (1976, René Allio; in French). ♦ Nov. 4 at 9 and Nov. 6 at 2: "The Smugglers" (1967, Luc Moullet; in French). ♦ Nov. 6 at 3:45 and 8:30: "Destroy, She Said" (1969, Marguerite Duras; in French).

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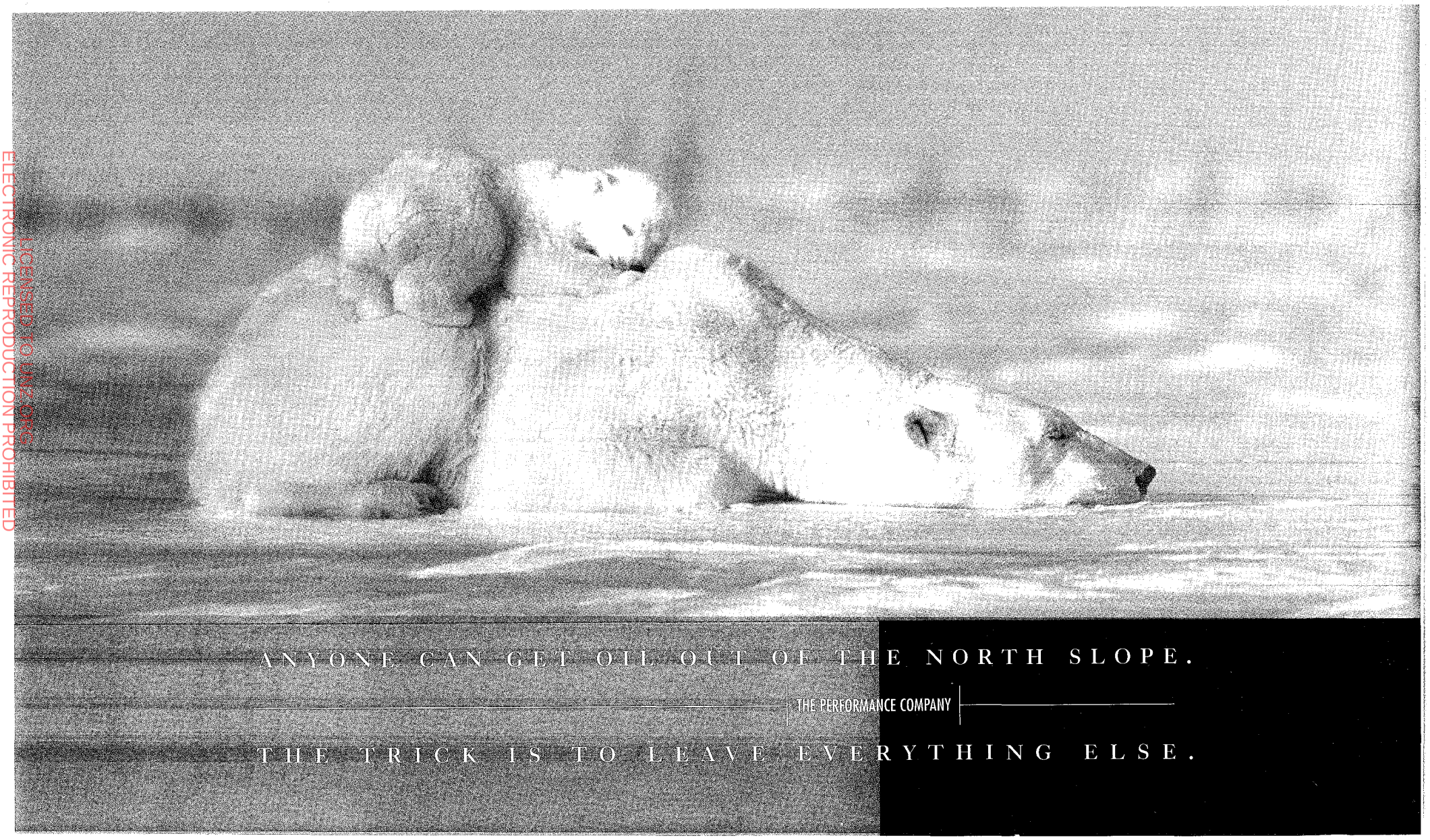

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POSTMARK caribbean

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THE SPICE ROUTE
On display at the Floating Market in Curaçao are the exotic ingredients of Caribbean cuisine.

a taste of the tropics

BY JESSICA B. HARRIS

I first journeyed to Jamaica more than thirty years ago. A friend and I had rented a villa, and like many other Caribbean visitors in those days, we arrived with our cooler full of prime U.S. steaks. But, unlike our fellow travellers, we soon discovered that we liked the food the servants in the house prepared for their own meals far better than we liked what we had brought. I can still recall the rich, dense taste of brown stewed chicken, the sharp, chile-infused bits of *escovitch* (raw fish fresh from the sea marinated in oils and spices), and my first wondrous taste of a rose apple's perfumed flesh.

The following year, vacationing in Haiti, I savored the tender texture of *griots de porc* (fried, marinated pork) and exulted in roasted chicken flavored with pineapple and coconut at the long since gone La Lanterne restaurant in Pétionville. Back then, these tastes were available only to intrepid travellers willing to venture off the beaten path.

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During the ensuing decades, however, we in America became culinary omnivores, voraciously gobbling our way through a potpourri of world cuisines. We mastered exotic ingredients—everything from adzuki beans to zucchini blossoms. We learned to tell with our tongues whether an olive oil was Tuscan or Iberian, and to discuss the varieties of chiles with a sophistication that would astonish most Mexicans. Sampling regional specialties while vacationing is a pastime that gradually became one of our top priorities.

Yet many of us neglected the cuisine of our island neighbors to the South, believing it to be either too hot, too spicy, or too starchy to be of interest. After driving past Caribbean trees laden with breadfruit, or photographing vendors in markets with baskets brimming with mangoes,

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES
Roadside establishments draw visitors to some of the best dining in the world.

sapodillas, and star fruit, most tourists preferred to return to their hotels to consume American or continental dishes that reflected little of their luscious tropical surroundings.

In fact, until recently, almost nothing was known of the cuisine of the region, one that is rich in flavors and as bright and revitalizing as the omnipresent sunshine. Ever since early settlers shared a wafer-like piece of cassava bread with a local

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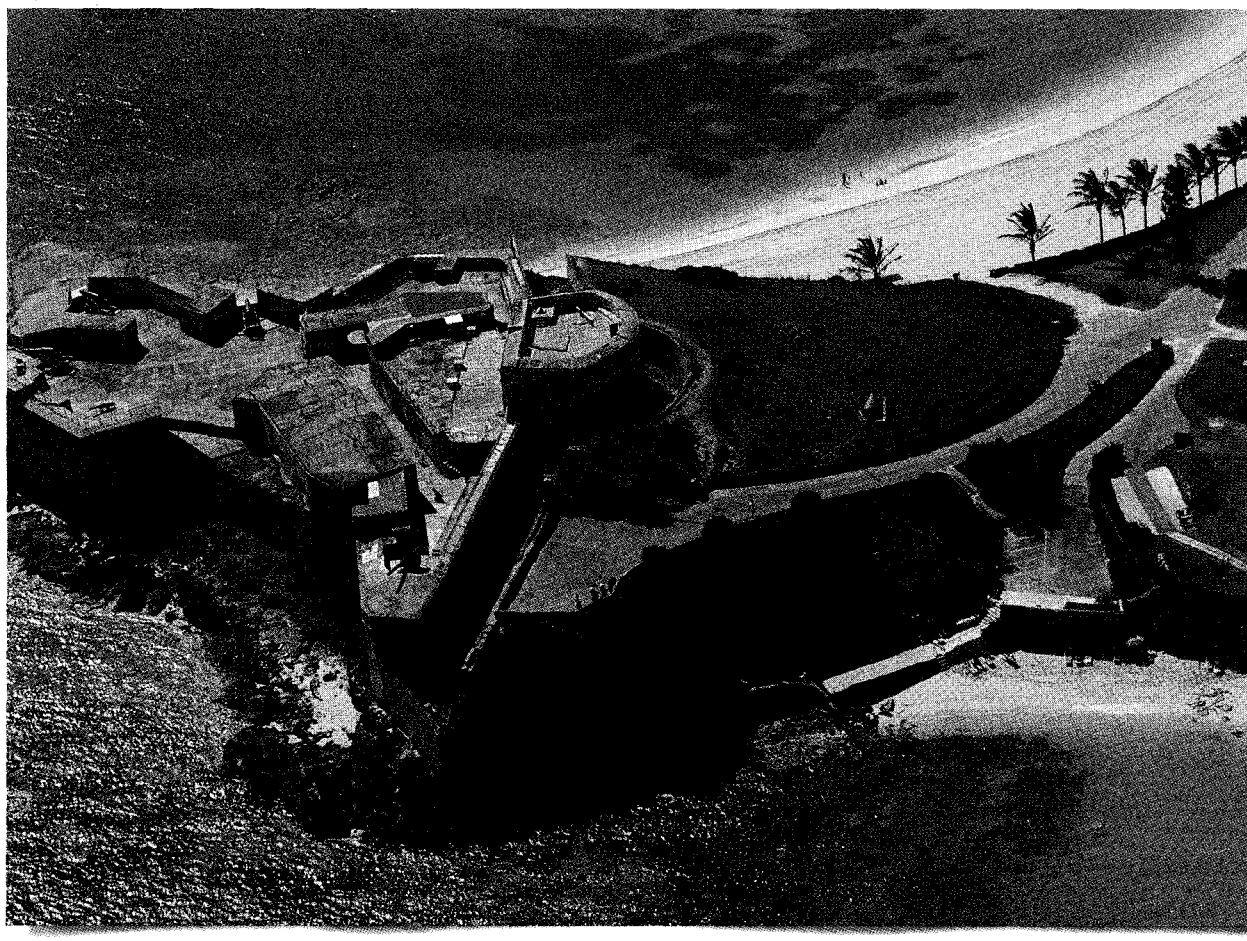

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Cacique, the islands of the Caribbean and the Atlantic islands of Bermuda and the Bahamas have hosted culinary exchanges that have made the region a melting pot of international tastes. Rich with a cornucopia of ingredients imported from the four corners of the globe, island cuisine is a chef's paradise that boasts influences from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

During the past decade, a quiet revolution has swept the region, a conflict like no other, with guerrilla fighters dressed in immaculate white jackets, carrying whisks and knives and cutting boards. It started when saltfish and akee began to win converts and turned up on breakfast tables in all-inclusive Jamaican resort hotels. Soon, visitors to Martinique and Guadeloupe began to savor *acrats* (codfish fritters) with their glasses of *ti* (a punch made from rum, lemon, and cane sugar syrup). Those who formerly knew little of native Bermuda tasted fish chowder and then brought bottles of sherry peppers home so they could attempt to recreate it. Jamaica's jerk chicken and pork, and Scotch bonnet chiles, became taste ambassadors that found their way onto menus in restaurants all over America. Seemingly overnight, a Caribbean Islands gustatory influence gave you special bragging rights.

courtesy of the Caribbean Culinary Federation

DESSERT ISLAND
Caribbean confections are gaining converts.

The full panoply of regional dishes were nevertheless hard to find. Locating obscure local specialties was a challenge met only by gourmands willing to venture from the cosseted precincts of their luxury hotels to grab a bite with locals. But propelled by cultural awareness and an increasing sophistication on the part of many travellers, the diversity of fulsome Caribbean flavors has finally begun to be appreciated. The region's food is now one of its main attractions.

The cuisine of the Caribbean is a complex mix that lends itself well to interpretation by chefs. In the current era, when techniques traverse the globe with supersonic speed, and when a new flavor may result in a coveted star rating, Caribbean food is hot in more ways than one. For many chefs, it has become a reason all by itself to journey to the islands, and numerous culinary gatherings have resulted. Small, informal competitions—such as one in Anguilla that TV star Sara Moulton and I judged in the early nineties—have given way to elaborate events where wine flows, food processors hum, and visiting chefs from Canada, Europe, and the U.S. slice and dice in sync with their Caribbean colleagues.

On Anguilla, at the Malliouhana hotel, where the world-class, twenty-five-thousand-bottle wine cellar has once again won a *Wine Spectator's* award, consulting chef Michel Rostang hosts an annual chef's week that draws from among the world's finest. Nancy Oakes from Boulevard in San Francisco was so taken with the event in 2000 that she and her husband, cookbook author and legendary sausage maker Bruce Aidell, gleefully returned this year. They, as well as an ever-increasing number of others like them, come to the Caribbean in search of new tastes and exotic ingredients, and they are rewarded with astonishing discoveries. Each island brings something novel to the table. Traditional dishes like *kadushi,* a cactus soup from Curaçao, keep company with creations such as an innovative tarte Tatin prepared with cactus slices that have the fragrance of rose and the texture of

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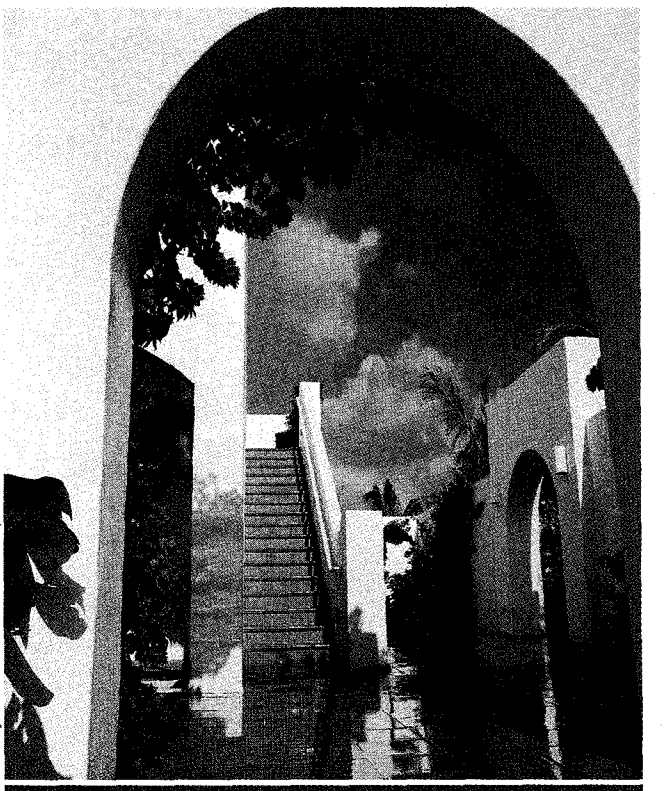
a crisp apple. The growth of excitement in the regional cuisine has been exemplified by the annual Caribbean competition held by the Caribbean Culinary Federation since 1993.

In the newfound enthusiasm for the flavors of the Caribbean region, the multiplicity of cultures is often forgotten. What's readily available on one island may not even exist on its neighbor's. There are distinctive differences between fish cakes in Barbados and Puerto Rico's *bacalaitos.* (The addition of Puerto Rico's signature herb *recao* gives *bacalaitos* a distinctly local flavor.) Fresh new flavors and tastes breed a kind of contagious excitement. One whiff of the fragile but pungent nutmeg fruit from Grenada inspires an irresistible urge to sample it straightaway, and the converted are soon passing on their new discovery to other travellers.



courtesy of the CuisinArt Resort & Spa

AEGEAN AURA
There's a sun-bleached Greek Island feel to the CuisinArt Resort & Spa on Anguilla, which has its own hydroponic farm.

As you might expect in a region known for its flamboyant fêtes, lively food festivals abound. The oldest and most exuberant is Guadeloupe's Fête des Cuisinières, an annual gathering of creole cooks. Featuring a high mass at the local cathedral, a chef's parade, and a grand luncheon in celebration of creole food, the colorful event has been held annually in Pointe-à-Pitre for decades. The fête provides a potent mix of past and present, as venerable cooks dressed in traditional garb (aglitter with the latest in contemporary gold jewelry) strut their stuff.

Many hotels, like Cobbler's Cove in Barbados, have invited guest chefs from around the globe to collaborate with their

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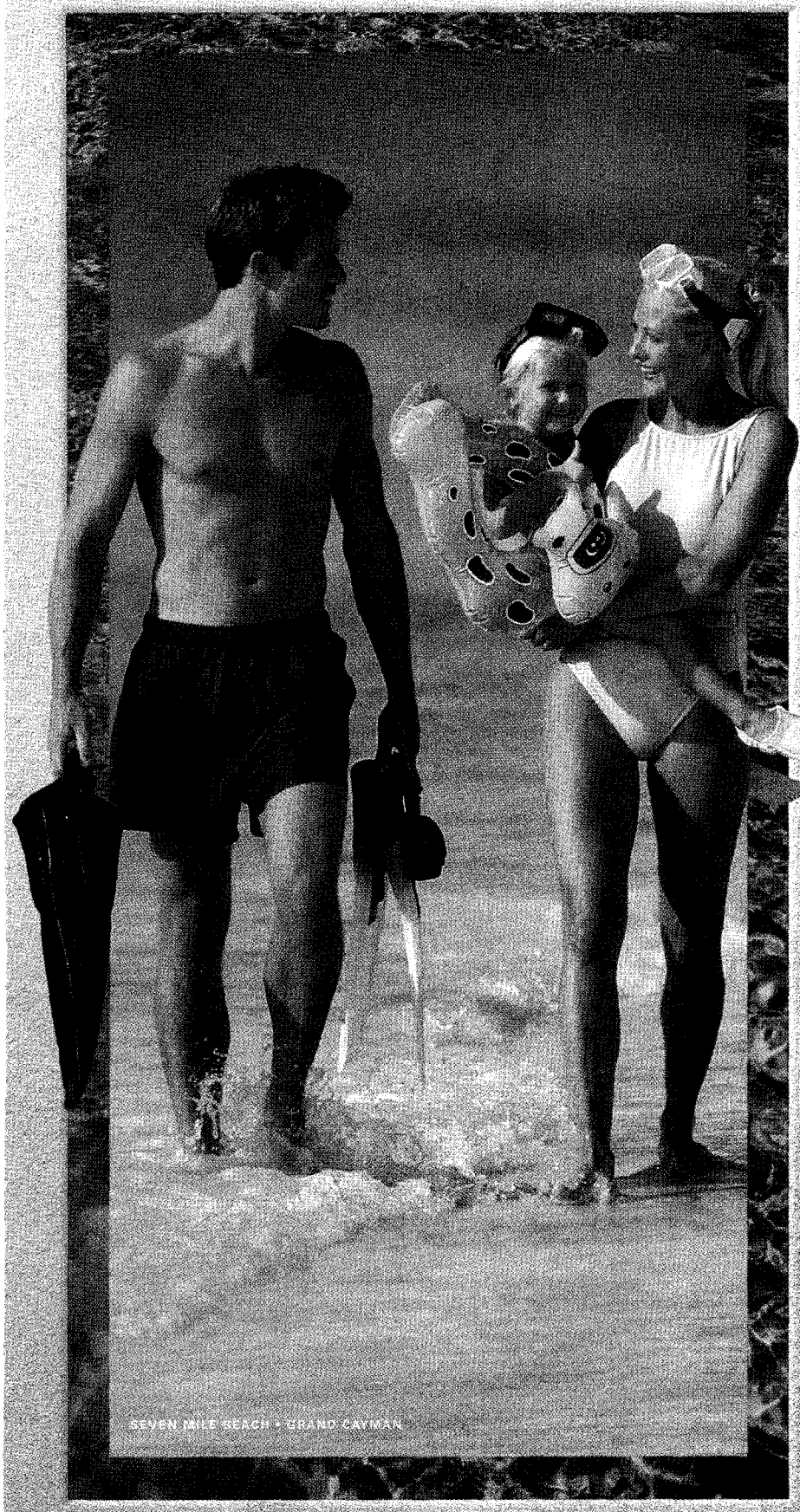

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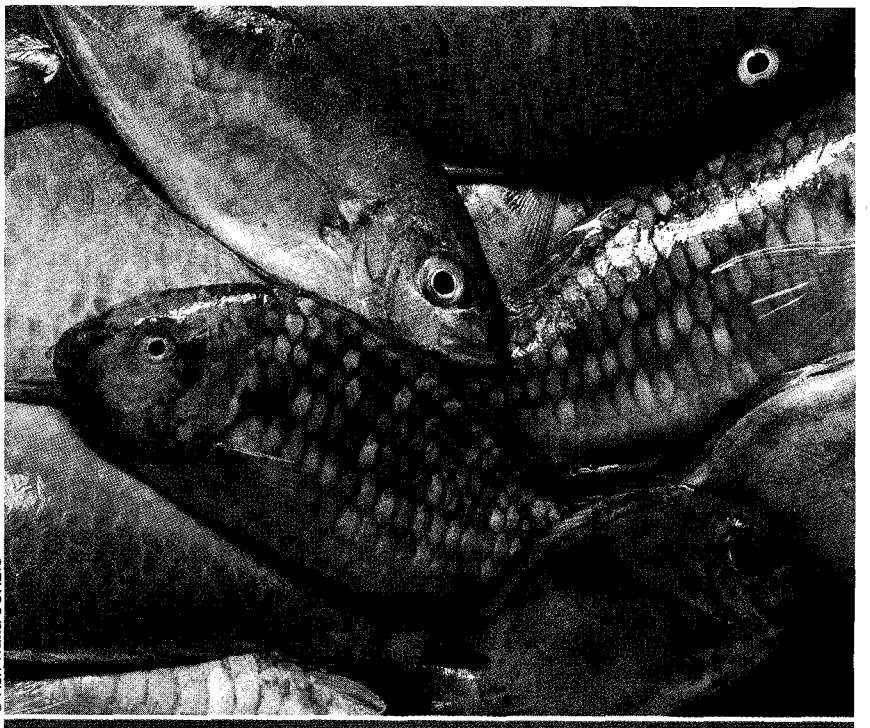

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A FINE KETTLE OF FISH
Some of the most delicious fish in the world call the Caribbean Sea their home.

staffs to the delectation of their guests. But Jasmines restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton Rose Hall, Jamaica, doesn't wait for guest chefs; it offers nightly what is described as "Jamasian cuisine." This is a fusion of Jamaican ingredients with Asian techniques of food preparation that produces dishes like chicken and coconut milk served in a coconut shell. This creation garnered sufficient raves from patrons and professional chefs to win Executive Sous Chef Dennis McIntosh the title of Jamaican Chef of the Year for 2001. At Prospect Reef Resort & Spa on Tortola, the British Virgin Islands, André Niederhauser (former president of the Caribbean Culinary Federation) is dedicated to fresh local ingredients with a passion forged when he was working in Jamaica and Costa Rica. He makes sure that visitors go home with a taste of the region on their tongues.

When Columbus discovered the Cayman Islands in 1503 while on his fourth and final journey to the New World, he saw so many turtles there that he gave the island chain its original name, Las Tortugas. To this day, the Cayman entrée of choice is turtle, which is farmed there, and often turns up in soups, stews, or even as steaks. Fine dining spots on Grand Cayman offer everything from macadamia-crusted loin of pork to lobster quesadillas, while local spots are more likely to serve conch chowder and an assortment of seafood. Folks in the region have been watching the growth in popularity of Cayman-style Caribbean cuisine since 1994 when a local chef, with a sumptuous offering of tasty jerked loin of goat, became Caribbean Chef of the Year at the second competition held by the Caribbean Culinary Federation.

The region's renaissance has many incarnations. When it's tea time at The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas, guests enjoy Ms. Iola's Authentic West Indian bush tea. The infusion of herbs

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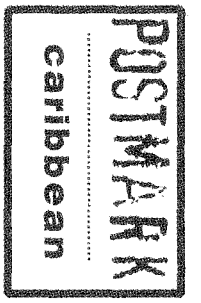

like basil, rosemary, bay leaves, peppermint, and gingerroot harkens back to the past and the tea embodies a venerable healing tradition. Visitors learn that lemongrass was used for fever, while ginger and fennel were used for upset stomachs. Native teas, when accompanied by Caribbean sweets like coconut tarts and pineapple cakes, are rich lessons in Caribbean culture. The CuisinArt Resort & Spa in Anguilla boasts its own hydroponic farm, cultivated to bring only the freshest ingredients to the table. At the Four Seasons Resort Nevis, garden walks and tours of the hotel's herb gardens are a part of the day's activities. The all-inclusive Almond Beach Club & Spa in Barbados offers a weekly cooking course for guests featuring Bajan dishes from its renowned Enid's restaurant. The resort has even published a cookbook that doubles as a coloring book for its younger guests. It all makes perfect sense. When Mark French of Puerto Rico's Mark's at the Meliá in Ponce prepares a dish of tamarind-glazed duck with sweet potatoes, or when Debra Sardinha-Metivier, executive chef of the Hilton Trinidad, offers a lunch of spicy chicken curry that is a legacy of indentured East Indians who arrived on the island in the nineteenth century, patrons not only want to eat the food, they also want to know how to bring it back home.

Restaurants are striving to meet the demands of an increasingly sophisticated clientele. Barbados' Cliff restaurant boasts a staggeringly beautiful dining room built like a Roman amphitheatre that faces the sea off the island's west coast. Chef Paul Owens sees to it that the food is good enough to compete in any international setting. His indisputably world-class dishes include tropical fruit soup with Sambuca sorbet, salt-cod cake served in a sweet corn and basil sauce, pan-roasted lobster, and cunning desserts like banana spring roll.

Norma Shirley—whose restaurant Norma's on the Terrace in Kingston, Jamaica, features local fare like smoked marlin and breadfruit—has garnered one of the coveted spots on *Condé Nast Traveler's* list of the fifty top restaurants in the world. Chef/owner Shirley views the growth of interest in Caribbean food with a missionary's zeal. "We have an opportunity to show the world that we in this region have some of the very best things—Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee, arguably the world's best, smoked marlin that rivals the finest salmon, and fantastic fruits like Otaheite apples," she says breathlessly. "Our culinary traditions are drawn from four continents and our people are comprised of myriad ethnic groups. When you look at the entire sweep of the Islands," she concludes beaming, "we're still an undiscovered culinary treasure trove."

(Jessica B. Harris, professor, restaurant reviewer, and food historian with a specialty in the foods of the African Diaspora, is working on a book entitled "Beyond Gumbo: Creole Fusion Food from the Atlantic Rim.")

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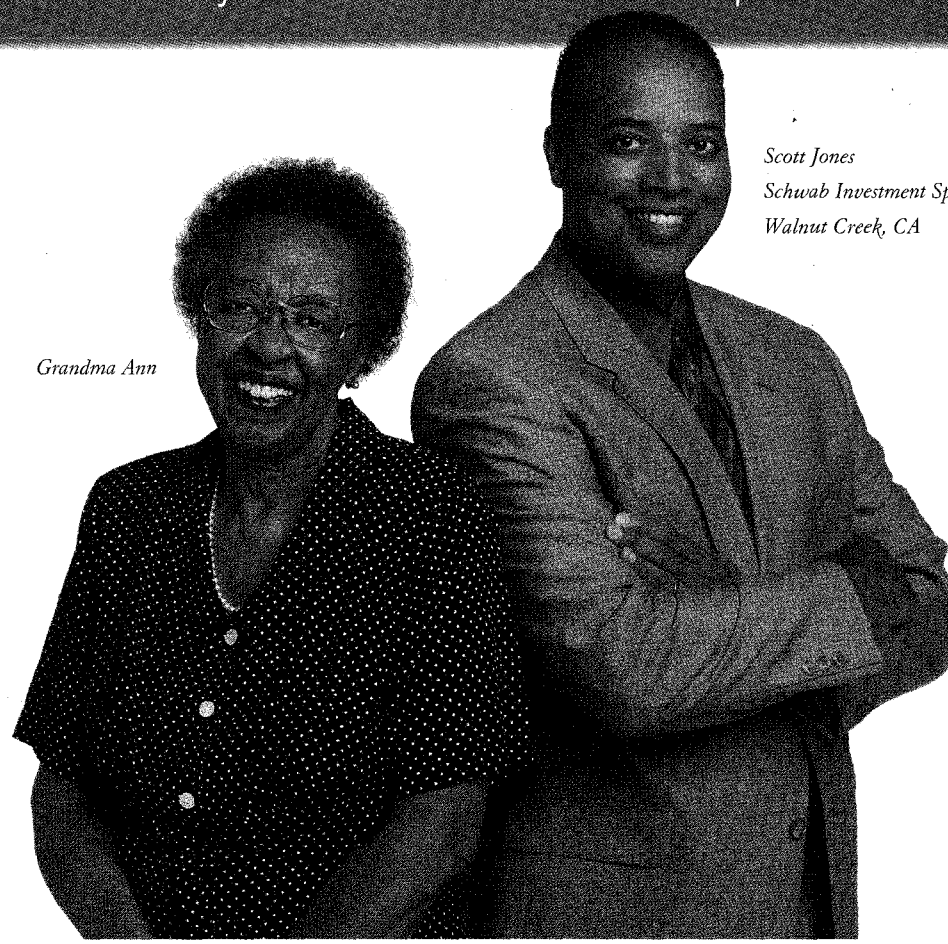

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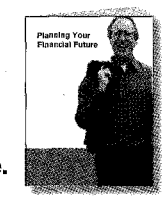

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
ONE MORE WEEK

Last week, *Crain's New York Business* held one of its regular breakfast forums at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in midtown Manhattan. *Crain's* forums are typically high-minded, if rather dry, affairs, and this particular one was billed as an opportunity to hear Mark Green, the city's public advocate and the Democratic candidate for mayor, discuss New York's economy in the aftermath of September 11th. About four hundred paying guests, mostly members of the city's business and public-policy establishments, showed up at the event, along with one nonpaying one.

The breakfast-crasher, a top aide to the Republican mayoral candidate, Michael Bloomberg, pitched up toward the middle of Green's remarks and stationed himself at the back of the room, by the coffee urns. He also had a topic he wanted to discuss—the Communist menace. In 1982, Green had written a book in which he alluded, in passing, to historical changes in Soviet ideology. This comment represented a "defense of Joseph Stalin," according to the aide, who held an impromptu news conference to make his charge. Pressed to specify what, exactly, he was accusing Green of, the aide demurred: "Is he a Stalinist? You'd have to ask him that."

Wealthy candidates have lately tended to come in one of two types, the vaguely sinister (Ross Perot) or the frankly comic (Steve Forbes), the difference being largely a matter of how they fare. New York's general-election campaign still has one week left to go, so it is not yet entirely clear which group Bloomberg will fall into. But every sign points to his being a Pantalone-like figure who is parted from a great deal of money and humiliated in the bargain.

Bloomberg has shelled out nearly thirty million dollars on his campaign. This is already a record for a municipal election in New York—indeed, probably the world—and by next Tuesday it is anticipated that the total will have risen by another ten million. Most of this spending has gone toward purchasing airtime, which is expensive in New York, and also toward paying high-priced aides, like the one who showed up at the Grand Hyatt. (Campaign records show that Bloomberg paid him forty-eight thousand dollars last month.)

Mark Green

Green was favored from the start to win the Democratic nomination, and yet, when he finally did so, at the end of last month, Bloomberg and his advisers seemed entirely unprepared to deal with it. Over the past two weeks, they have cycled through at least three separate lines of attack, some more credible than the Communist shtick, but all straining in different directions, and none executed with much conviction. Last week, for instance, when he was endorsed by Governor George Pataki, Bloomberg used the occasion to chastise Green for being too liberal, only to acknowledge, as the Governor looked on in dismay, "I am a liberal, yes, I think in many senses I am a liberal."

Beyond his blunders, Bloomberg has also had to struggle with a graver problem. At the *Crain's* breakfast, Green discussed how critical New York's condition is likely to prove. He predicted that next year the city would confront a deficit of up to six billion dollars, or fifteen per cent of its total budget, and called this "as great a potential fiscal crisis as any we've suffered in modern times." Since it generally takes months, or even years, for bad news to work its way through the tax system, it's a safe bet that the budget gap will turn out to be even larger than the

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

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"Baseball or anthrax?"

• •

grim predictions already being made.

Green did not discuss in much detail how he would deal with the deficit—most of what he said at the breakfast had to do with soliciting state and federal aid, a process that is now under way. It's obvious, however, that the city will have to drastically reduce the services it provides. And it will have to do so at precisely the time the need for these services, thanks to the shrinking economy, will be expanding. It doesn't take a particularly dire imagination to envision what will happen next. Poverty, crime, and homelessness will rise, requiring still greater—though unavailable—government expenditures. The next mayor will thus almost certainly find himself riding the same boom cycle that has made the city such a vibrant and attractive place in recent years—but in the opposite direction. And this is without even factoring in the possibility of more terrorist attacks.

To the extent that Bloomberg's candidacy ever had a premise, it was that running New York wasn't actually all that difficult. The city needed a mayor who was smart and energetic, and that was more or less it—just about any experience in public service was, he liked to imply, probably too much. September 11th has changed the job description in ways that neither Bloomberg nor anyone else could have anticipated but that have, nonetheless, altered the terms of the election. Whatever limitations there were to "politics as usual" in New York—and there were many—it now seems a condition almost to be wished for.

—*Elizabeth Kolbert*

WIND ON CAPITOL HILL A CREDIBLE THREAT?

Last week, the House of Representatives had the feeling of an old Currier & Ives print. In normal times, the House is full of tourists. When there is a vote, the members rush over from the three buildings across the street, where they have their offices. Then they go back. The actual House of Representatives is a bit of a stage set; you don't often see the members there. But the three House office buildings were being searched for anthrax spores, and nobody was allowed inside. Each member had been allotted a tiny temporary office in another government building, several blocks away, but who wanted to schlepp back and forth all day? So hundreds of members gravitated to the House chamber. They sat on their leather benches, actually listening to the debate, or stood along the edges of the room behind a brass rail and whispered intently to each other. The meeting rooms of the Capitol were also full of members and their aides (but no tourists were allowed). There were even lobbyists in the lobbies. One half-expected to round a corner and encounter men in top hats gesticulating stiffly and using spitoons.

Last Wednesday, in the middle of all this, Matthew Dallek, a young Washington aide, was looking for a quiet place to talk. A couple of years ago, Dallek published a book on Ronald Reagan's early political career, but he decided to forgo the hard life of a junior academic, and he now works as a speechwriter for Richard Gephardt, the House Democratic leader. To mangle a line from "All the King's Men," Dallek had thought he was abandoning the rigors of history, only to find himself right in the middle of the rigors of History.

After some scouting, Dallek wound up in the coffee shop in the basement of the Capitol Building. He gave off the friendly, intense, rushed feeling one customarily gets from an important congressman's aide. The previous week, everybody had been sent home when Gephardt and Dennis Hastert, the Speaker, closed down the House side of the Capitol, and Dallek had worked from his apartment; now, with a couple of crisis-related bills on the floor, things were insanely busy.

On September 12th, Dallek's father, Robert Dallek, also a historian, was quoted in *USA Today* criticizing President Bush for not returning to Washington immediately after he got word of the terrorist attacks. This set off one of the many unresolved subplots of the big story: Bush's senior adviser, Karl Rove, telephoned Robert Dallek in his office at Boston University and assured him that the reason the Presidential party had not come home was that it had received a "credible threat" to Air Force One, and ever since then people have been arguing about who was right, Dallek or Rove. Now the shoe was on the other foot. The House leaders were fending off accusations that they were, as the *Post* headline put it, "WIMPS" for having shut down their side of the Capitol while the Sen-

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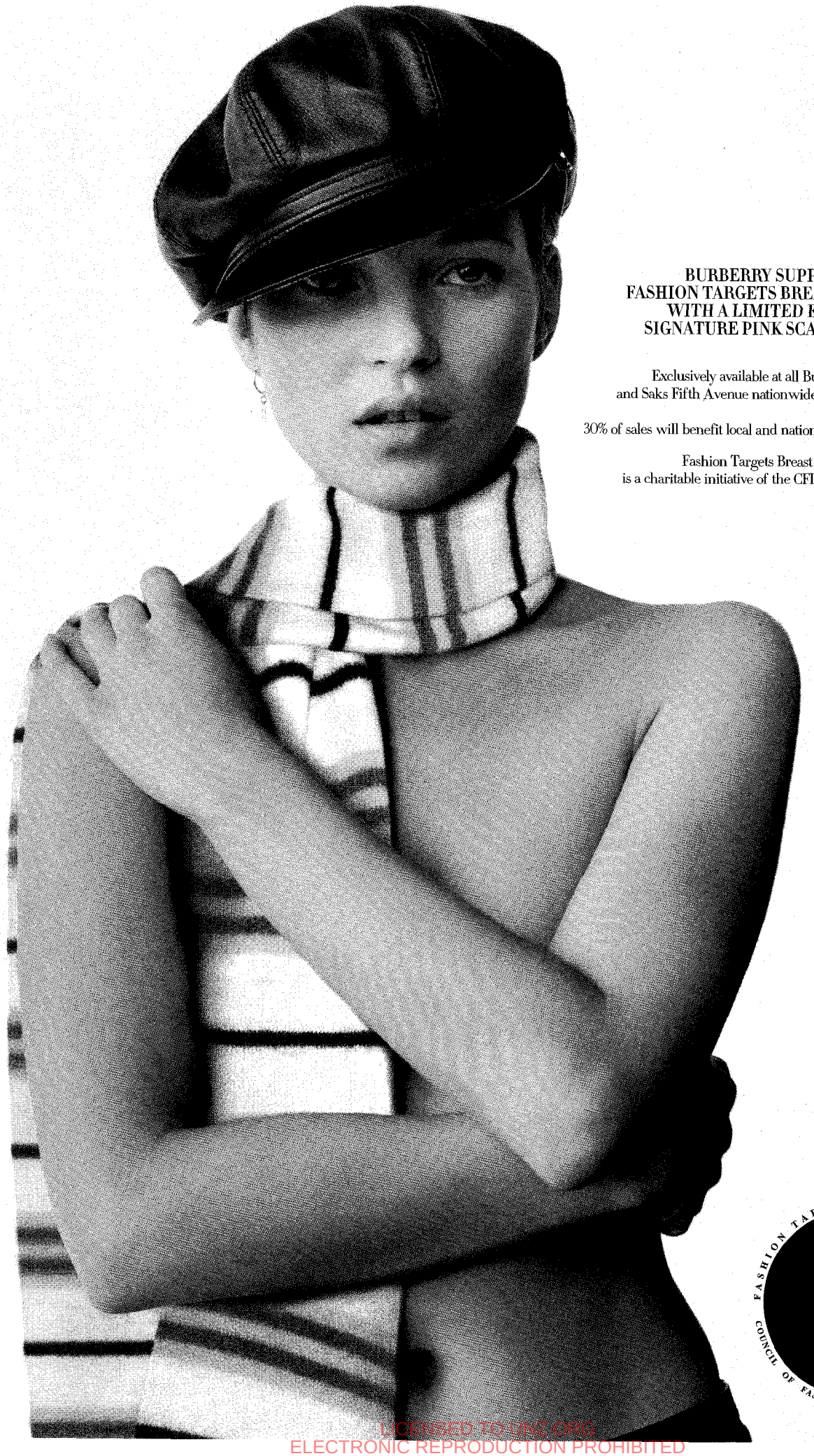

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ate, where anthrax had actually been found, stayed open. The anthrax people had told Gephardt's staff that they did not even need to be tested. So it would ill behoove Matt Dallek to act as if there were a credible threat to him.

Still! Colleagues of his, over in the office of Tom Daschle, the Senate Majority Leader, really were in some danger. "There's a sense that they're coming at the Congress," Dallek said. He described his attitude, and that of his peers on Capitol Hill, this way: "Healthy anxiety, not fear. And a sense of purpose. This stuff we do up here really matters."

Dallek's book, "The Right Moment," is subtitled "Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics." That's a demonstration of the luxury of hindsight. Back in the mid-sixties, the rise of the conservative political movement in California looked to most people in Washington like West Coast weirdness, not a harbinger of the future. I asked Dallek whether he felt as if he were now living through another decisive turning point. As we were talking, a Capitol policeman at a nearby table was conducting a loud conversation with two of his friends about the advent of the end of days.

I thought I could see the congressional aide receding and the historian coming to the fore. "I don't necessarily think this is a permanent change," Dallek said. "Honestly, I think it's too early to tell. One of the things I've been most struck by since I came here is that this place runs in a day-by-day, week-by-week fashion. You don't know what's going to happen. We respond to events. It's the nature of the place, but especially so the week or two after nine-eleven. And now even more so with the anthrax."

—*Nicholas Lemann*

DEPT. OF DEFENSE
COMBAT ON MADISON

A course in *krav maga*, or contact combat, the official self-defense system of the Israeli Defense Forces, was added to the standard Abs/Aerobics/Yoga menu at David Barton Gym, on Madison Avenue, the other night. The class was led by a carefree-looking twenty-nine-year-old named David Kahn, a Princeton graduate with a law degree and a black belt, who trained with the *krav maga* grand master in Israel. As Kahn called the class to order, in a big, spare studio, the treadmillers and StairMasterers outside thumped steadily, their eyes glued to television screens, on which Greta Van Susteren could be seen above the title "Anthrax: Credibility or Confusion?"

A krav maga disciple.

The pupils—an expectant, respectful bunch—were dressed in T-shirts and shorts or black leggings, and ranged in age from the early twenties to the seventies. Kahn, wearing a black T-shirt bearing the Hebrew letters for *krav maga* and black warmup pants emblazoned with the Star of David, summoned his assistant, a cheerful, stocky mountain of muscles named Greg Holland. Using Greg as an Osama bin Laden stand-in, Kahn rapidly demonstrated a left punch, a right punch, a jab to the throat, a punch to the kidneys, a knee to the groin, a foot to the groin, a thumb to an eye; before long, Greg was on the floor, about to get an armlock, a leglock, a butt to the head, a bite to the neck, and a few other strikes too fast for the unwary eye to catch. Very impressive. Kahn grinned with ease and confidence, and held up his finger-spread hands. Everybody in the class exhaled, some with an exuberant "Yeah!," itching to get at the enemy.

"I'll have you doing all these things, step by step," Kahn said. "Survival in any situation is the point. You rely on your natural instincts. You react with speed, economy of motion, and the appropriate measure of force. You instinctively strike at the body's vulnerable parts."

"Are we learning what the military learns?" a woman asked.

"It's a civilian adaptation, for people in the community to defend themselves," Kahn said. "There are no rules on the street. The defender must do whatever is necessary. *Krav maga* uses the concept of *retzef*, Hebrew for continuous motion, to complete the defense. It's designed for people of all shapes, all sizes, all physical abilities, regardless of age."

"Will it work?" another pupil asked.

"It works!" the teacher said firmly. "*Krav maga* was originally developed in the late nineteen-thirties, by a Czech, Imi Lichtenfeld, whose father was chief martial-arts instructor of the Czech police. Imi created it to help the Jewish community in Bratislava defend itself against anti-Semites. When the State of Israel was formed, in 1948, Imi taught Israeli soldiers hand-to-hand combat. *Krav maga* was then adapted for civilian use in the late nineteen-sixties. We use the most elementary defensive tactics against a sucker punch or bear hug, and also the most advanced techniques against guns or grenades. I'll teach you the way to break an attacker's finger. *Krav maga* is world-famous for its disarming techniques against assailants with handguns, rifles, knives, sticks, and even rocks. All right. I like teaching you guys," Kahn said. "Here's the three-sixty instinctive defense. The attacker slaps your face or delivers a hook punch. You use your peripheral vision to see the whole attacker, not just his arms."

"Did this really help kill Nazis?" one of the older students asked.

"It did, it really did," Kahn said. "And terrorists in Israel, too."

Instructions and exercises followed. The pupils were breathing hard, concentrating, full of hope and purpose. First: Basic outlet stance, keeping arms up in a protective position in front of face and turning slightly to protect the groin area from sneaky Talibanites! Straight punches—*pow!*—delivered, with hand and wrist alignment and good hip rotation, to that pack of cowardly killers!

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Body weight shifting with small steps to deliver marvellous right punch—*smack!*—marvellous left punch—*bam!*—one after the other to those murderers, those cowards! ("In physics, a body in motion stays in motion, unless hit upon by an outside force!" Greg explained helpfully.) Then lots of short-distance elbow strikes—against the crazy Atta, against the vile bin Laden!

By the time the class ended, the pupils, young and old, were in an ecstatic sweat.

"Great stuff!" one said. "Maybe Jeremy Glick knew *krav maga.* He and his wife used to live right across the street from here. He was the thirty-one-year-old passenger on the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania. Just before the crash, he told his wife on the cell phone that he was going to rush the hijackers."

Kahn nodded. "*Krav maga* was developed for just that kind of situation," he said.

—*Lillian Ross*

POSTSCRIPT
A NEW YORK KNIGHT

Last Sunday, the select company of Gotham Knights lost one of its boldest and most Manhattan-besotted paladins: the historian Sir John Plumb died, at the age of ninety. The doormen at the Carlyle, where he rested his lance every spring and fall, called him Sir Plumb, but old friends like Pat Moynihan, Brooke Astor, and Brendan Gill called him Jack, as in Falstaff. Although Plumb was more taken with first-growth Bordeaux than with sack, he, too, was a virtuoso deflater of humbug, as well as a writer of pungent, often pyrotechnically dazzling prose. A lower-middle-class boy from Leicester, he had climbed up the academic hierarchy the hard way: rejected from Cambridge as a student, he was sent to languish in the limbo of the University College at Leicester, whose residents, in the early thirties, numbered just eighty students and faculty, "including," he used to say, "the hall porter who taught botany." After that bleak start, Plumb spent most of his life at Christ's College, Cambridge, where in the nineteen-sixties he taught novices like me, Roy Porter, and John Brewer to keep faith with the literary craft of narrative, to have the intellectual courage to tackle big subjects, and to see human history as an epic of social evolution.

Although he wore owlish eyeglasses, Jack Plumb, small, round, and feisty, was hardly your standard-issue cloistered, pipe-puffing don. He favored loudly striped shirts, soft-brimmed blue fedoras, fast cars, and big dark coats, in which he would stalk down Madison Avenue, make stage entrances at the Knickerbocker Club, or trot briskly through the Park. Ben Sonnenberg, the advertising and public-relations millionaire, threw open the doors of his Gramercy Park palazzo to Plumb, who revelled in the courtly glamour, especially since it had been earned by someone who came from nothing. Seated on the plumped-up brocade cushions, he held court there, summoning the "steward" for pots of tea served from Georgian silver.

Plumb divided humanity into those who raised the temperature of a room when they entered and those who lowered it, and he himself could be relied on for serious central heating. Half Edward Gibbon, half Max Bialystock, he was never happier than when he was ordering colossal ice-cream sundaes for my children at Rumpelmayer's, wolfing down shad roe at Gage & Tollner, or accompanying Brooke Astor to a Literary Lions evening at the public library. He brought a punchy ebullience to the historical journalism he practiced for *Horizon* and *The New York Review of Books.* For Plumb, history since Herodotus had been a public art, which somehow had become unnaturally imprisoned in the academy; unless it got out—at least for short breaks on parole—it would deserve to rot.

Plumb spent a year at Columbia University in 1960, in its prelapsarian wonder years. He was elated to be in the company of Richard Hofstadter, Peter Gay, and Garrett Mattingly, and became so enamored of the city that he designated himself New York Goy. During the next decade, as the city slid into decline and mayhem, he defended it against its many critics, comparing them, as "they cackle with glee," to "blue-bottle flies settling on carrion, buzzing with delight." Nothing dimmed the high-voltage exuberance he felt every time he landed on this side of the Atlantic. He must have been one of the very few Englishmen (or, I suppose, New Yorkers) for whom the sight of the Van Wyck Expressway was a tonic. In one of his published odes to the city, he wrote, "Where else can you buy second-hand food, or consult a cat psychiatrist, or buy false eyelashes for your dog?"

In the nineteen-seventies, he lived in Brooklyn Heights for a year, and it became his habit to shrug off all warnings about personal safety by regularly strolling on the Brooklyn Bridge. He liked to drink in the Manhattan skyline, which he regarded as the most heroic accomplishment of mankind. Inevitably, one day, he met his mugger, who grunted the usual non-negotiable demand for his wallet. But Plumb wasn't about to capitulate to someone with such poor enunciation. "I don't understand you," he snapped back, as if the bandit were a particularly obtuse undergraduate. "Understand this?" said the mugger, sticking a bayonet blade against Plumb's throat. Momentarily depressed by the encounter, Plumb went home, wrote down the story, and sold it, as he cheerfully boasted, for five times the amount lifted from his pocket. That, he said, was the New York way.

I saw him for what turned out to be the last time a few weeks ago, in his rooms at Cambridge. Illness had shrunk him quite a bit, so that now he not only sounded like the elderly Voltaire but looked like him, too. Like Voltaire, Plumb held up a historical mirror that had become quite dark in old age. He was not sanguine about our chances of survival, and he likened modern America to the late Roman Empire, circa 300: impossibly overextended, beleaguered by barbarians, aware that all its glories of law and engineering might yet be demolished by incomparably less sophisticated peoples for whom destruction is a vocation and life is expendable.

Still, as the evening drew in, he wanted to know how we were faring after September 11th, and when I told him that on a recent Saturday night Times Square had been packed and the theatres humming, the old roguish twinkle came back for a moment and he recalled an evening not so long ago when we stood in his apartment at the Carlyle, hoisted glasses of Krug, and watched the lights go on down Madison Avenue, and he pronounced the whole scene "urban champagne." He would not have wanted us to lose our fizz.

—*Simon Schama*

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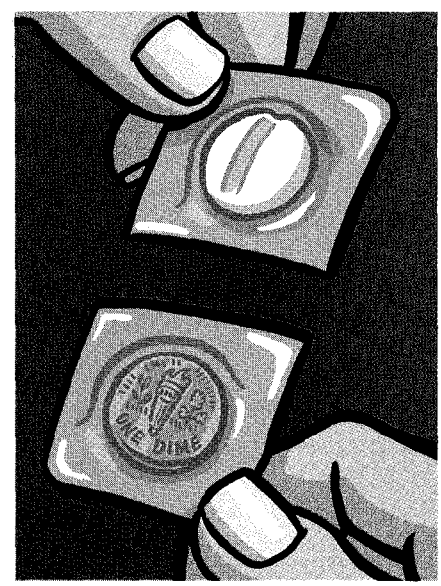
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
NO PROFIT, NO CURE

Last week, the United States won what was deemed a victory in the war on bioterrorism. Tommy Thompson, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, cut a deal with the Bayer Corporation to buy a huge batch of the anti-anthrax drug Cipro at ninety-five cents a tablet, half what Bayer had been asking. Thompson "negotiated" the lower price by threatening to break Bayer's patent on the drug.

The ultimatum was curious, given that there was no real Cipro shortage, and that, as one of Thompson's own advisers said, other drugs, such as doxycycline, have been shown to be just as effective against anthrax. In fact, after the deal, other drug companies cleverly offered to donate shipments of their own antibiotics to the government, as long as the Food and Drug Administration authorized them for use against anthrax. (The offer was good P.R. and good business, given the commercial value of the F.D.A.'s imprimatur.) So Thompson's threat to commandeer the Cipro patent was a response not to a medical crisis but to a political one. The Bush Administration was under a great deal of pressure, most notably from Senator Charles Schumer, who had been pushing it to override Bayer's patent. "One company should not be able to stand in the way of the health needs of the nation," Schumer told me last week. "And Bayer should not be reaping profits from this crisis."

It's an appealing sentiment, but Schumer's cure is worse than the disease. Profits are the reason that drugs like Cipro exist in the first place. Bayer invested hundreds of millions of dollars to develop and produce Cipro because it believed that it would own the Cipro patent for sixteen years—enough time for it to recoup its investment and reward its shareholders. Proclaiming that companies shouldn't profit in a time of need is a fine way to discourage them from making such investments.

We don't have to guess what happens to antibiotic research and development when profits dry up. We know, because we saw what happened thirty years ago. At that point, the battle against infectious disease appeared to have been won, at least in the developed world. In 1967, the Surgeon General, William Stewart, declared, "The time has come to close the book on infectious diseases. We have basically wiped out infection in the United States." The old drugs could handle whatever bugs came along; there was no market for new ones. So drug companies essentially stopped putting money into antibiotic research. Besides, given the choice between making an antibiotic that a person might take for two weeks once in a lifetime or developing an antidepressant that a person would take every day for the rest of his life, drug companies naturally opted for the latter. That's why



in the past twenty-five years they have developed just one new class of antibiotic; and it's why in 1999 only three of the thirty-five new drugs approved by the F.D.A. were antibiotics. The blockbusters of the nineteen-nineties that treated chronic conditions—depression, high cholesterol, impotence—were drugs like Prozac, Lipitor, and Viagra. Biotechnology just followed the money.

And now we are facing a crisis in antibiotics. We desperately need new drugs to fight infectious diseases—not just agents of bioterrorism, like anthrax or even the strain of drug-resistant super-anthrax which has reportedly been developed in Russia, but a host of more mundane deadly bugs, like virulent drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis, pneumococcus, and staphylococcus. Today, infectious diseases are the third leading cause of death in the United States; every year, fourteen thousand people die from drug-resistant infections acquired in American hospitals. More than thirty new infectious microbes have been discovered in the past two decades. "There is an enormous number of microbes around, and they are constantly fighting back against the drugs," Gary Woodnutt, a vice-president of microbiology at GlaxoSmithKline, said. "Over time, there's been an inexorable rise in their resistance."

A burgeoning need for new drugs means a burgeoning market. Lately, drug companies have come to recognize the importance—the potential profitability—of combating infectious diseases. This year, they are projected to spend $4.1 billion on antibiotic research. Advances in genomics and molecular biology have made it possible to fight microbes in entirely new ways. "The genomics revolution really was a revolution as far as antibiotics are concerned," Woodnutt says. "We're in a new age of drug discovery."

Unfortunately, drug development is a long, expensive, and uncertain process. It can take fifteen years and hundreds of millions of dollars to go from finding a bacterial target to putting a drug into production. Now more than ever we want to encourage drug companies to devote their considerable resources to antibiotic R. & D., rather than to another treatment for baldness or impotence. Is this the moment to inform them that if they come up with something of genuine worth, something we vitally need, we may just decide to break their patent?

In a market economy, the most important signal is price. It tells companies what people value and what they don't. As a nation, we scarcely thought twice about paying Bell Boeing billions of dollars for a fleet of Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. We've never demanded that Northrop Grumman deliver its Stealth bombers at half price. Yet in the war on bioterrorism we begrudge Bayer its profits, making good health look like bad business. We got a great price on Cipro last week. But we may pay for it later.

—*James Surowiecki*

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

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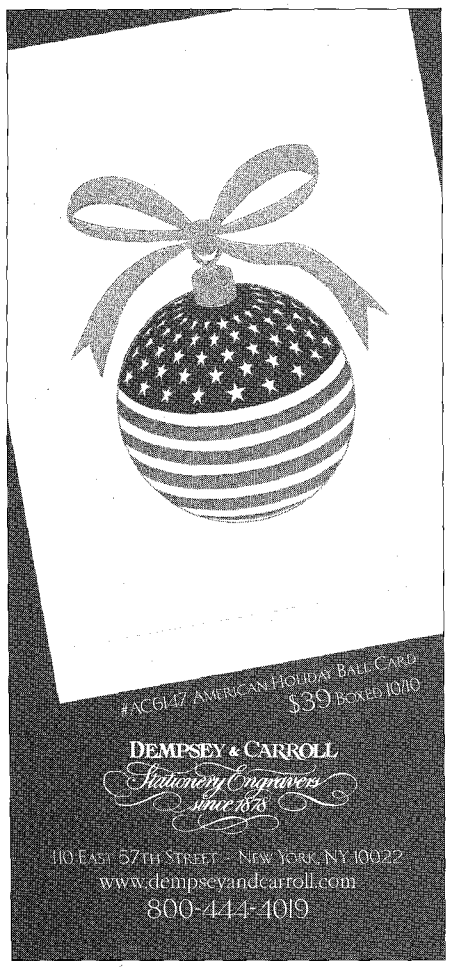

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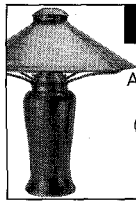

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ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

WATCHING THE WARHEADS

The risks to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

The Bush Administration's hunt for Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network has evolved into a regional crisis that has put Pakistan's nuclear arsenal at risk, exacerbated the instability of the government of General Pervez Musharraf, and raised the possibility of a nuclear conflict between Pakistan and India. These unintended consequences of the President's decision to mount air and ground attacks on the Taliban government in Afghanistan have created a serious rift between our government's intelligence and diplomatic experts on South Asia and the decision-makers of the Bush Administration.

Musharraf's standing has become more precarious as the intense American air war produces greater numbers of civilian casualties, street demonstrations in Islamabad, Quetta, Peshawar, and elsewhere, and discontent within his own military. The Administration's top officials are known to view the threat to Musharraf as potentially dangerous but manageable. "I was worried initially," a senior military planner told me. "But Musharraf has done a good job. He's put the hard-liners in a box and locked it." The officer was referring to Musharraf's decision three weeks ago to force the resignation or reassignment of a group of Army and intelligence officers he considered untrustworthy. (Musharraf himself came to power in a coup against Pakistan's elected government, in 1999, with the help of those officers.) Similarly, a former high-level State Department official, who maintains close contact with events in Pakistan, said he understands that Musharraf has assured the Bush Administration that "only the most reliable military people remain in control of the arsenal, and if there's any real worry he'd disarm them. He does not want the crazies to precipitate a real war."

Nonetheless, in recent weeks an élite Pentagon undercover unit—trained to slip into foreign countries and find suspected nuclear weapons, and disarm them if necessary—has explored plans for an operation inside Pakistan. In 1998, Pakistan successfully tested a nuclear device, heralded as the Islamic world's first atomic bomb. According to United States government estimates, Pakistan now has at least twenty-four warheads, which can be delivered by intermediate-range missiles and a fleet of F-16 aircraft.

Some of the government's most experienced South Asia experts have doubts about Musharraf's ability to maintain control over the military and its nuclear arsenal in the event of a coup; there are also fears that a dissident group of fundamentalist officers might try to seize a warhead. The Army and the influential Inter-Services Intelligence, or I.S.I., have long-standing religious and personal ties to many of the leaders of the Taliban, dating back to Afghanistan's war against the Soviet Union in the nineteen-eighties, when Pakistan was the main conduit for American support.

One U.S. intelligence officer expressed particular alarm late last week over the questioning in Pakistan of two retired Pakistani nuclear scientists, who were reported by authorities to have connections to the Taliban. Both men, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Chaudry Abdul Majid, had spent their careers at the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, working on weapons-related projects. The intelligence officer, who is a specialist in nuclear proliferation in South Asia, depicted this latest revelation as "the tip of a very serious iceberg," and told me that it shows that pro-Taliban feelings extend beyond the Pakistani Army into the country's supposedly highly disciplined nuclear-weapons laboratories. Pakistan's nuclear researchers are known for their nationalism and their fierce patriotism. If two of the most senior scientists are found

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to have been involved in unsanctioned dealings with the Taliban, it would suggest that the lure of fundamentalism has, in some cases, overcome state loyalty. "They're retired, but they have friends on the inside," the intelligence officer said.

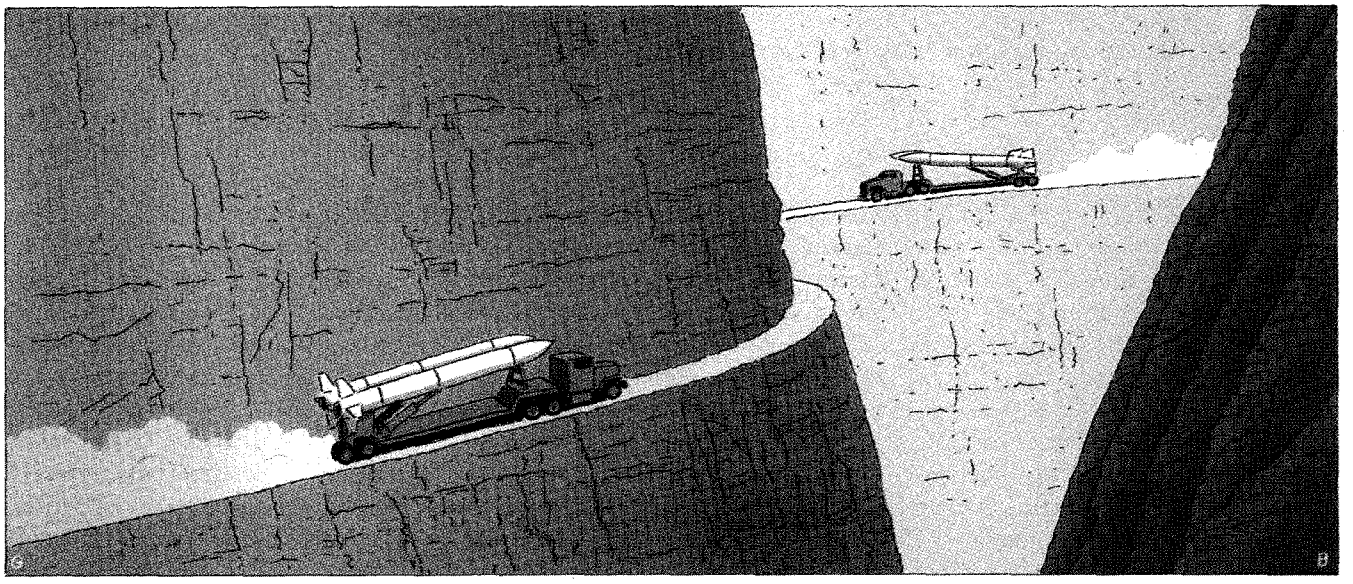
Musharraf and many of his newly appointed senior aides are *muhajir*—immigrants who fled to Pakistan from India after Partition, in 1947—but they are in charge of an Army that traditionally has been dominated by officers from the Punjab region. Even now, an estimated ninety per cent of the officers are Punjabi. "These things matter a lot," a retired Pakistani diplomat told me. "The Punjabi officers would be thinking that there's an earthquake or a revolution taking place. Is it because of the ethnic background of Musharraf? Don't write off the unhappiness within the Army."

The former diplomat also took issue with the Bush Administration's belief that Musharraf has resolved the loyalty issue by replacing top commanders with officers believed to be less ideological. "To remove the top two or three doesn't matter at all," he said. "The philosophy remains." The I.S.I., he added, is "a parallel government of its own. If you go through the officer list, almost all of the I.S.I. regulars would say, of the Taliban, 'They are my boys.' "

With no sign that the Taliban leadership is weakening, Musharraf, under threat, is suspected by some officials in Washington and New Delhi of seeking to placate the fundamentalists by looking the other way during renewed terrorist attacks in the last month, allegedly sponsored by the I.S.I., on Indian targets in the disputed region of Kashmir. India and Pakistan have gone to war twice over Kashmir, which is dominated by India but has a mostly Muslim population, and it is a highly emotional issue for fundamentalists in the I.S.I. and the Taliban.

With the continued American bombing of the Taliban, the strategic risks are escalating. Our government is, in effect, working against itself as the air war in Afghanistan intensifies the political pressure on Musharraf—internally from the I.S.I., and externally from the street demonstrations against him, which are led by the fundamentalists. "Nobody's going to move against Musharraf unless there's an uprising in the streets," a second Pakistani diplomat told me. "How to prevent the uprising is to stop dropping bombs on civilian targets."

Critics of the Administration's policy emphasized in interviews that they viewed the war against the Taliban as just. The problem is that the bombing has not had the quick, decisive effect that military planners had hoped for. One senior Administration official told me last week that, despite the bombings and the efforts by C.I.A. operatives in the area to persuade Taliban commanders to defect, "People in my building wonder why there hasn't been a truly significant defection." In a subsequent interview, a former C.I.A. officer provided one reason for that failure. The agency, he said, had few or no people in the field who speak fluent Pashto, the language of the Taliban, and had been forced to rely on I.S.I. officers to communicate its offers to potential defectors. Thus, he said, "the same Pakistani case officers who built up the Taliban are doing the translating for the C.I.A. It's like using the Gottis to translate a conversation with the Lucheses." Another intelligence officer depicted the language situation in Afghanistan as "madness." He added, "Our biggest mistake is allowing the I.S.I. to be our eyes and ears."



The American military action in Afghanistan has exacerbated tensions between India and Pakistan.

GUY BILLOUT

It was a lack of operational security that, apparently, led to the death, late last week, of one of the most prominent operatives in the Taliban war. According to press reports, Abdul Haq, an Afghan guerrilla leader who was a hero in the war against the Soviets, had been ambushed and executed after a two-day standoff in eastern Afghanistan. Haq was said by the Taliban to have been on a mission for the United States, and to have been carrying large amounts of money—presumably to be used to induce Taliban commanders to defect. An Afghan press report subsequently quoted a Taliban spokesman who said that fifty of Haq's supporters, possibly including "foreigners," had also been surrounded. Haq's death was a major

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"I'm sorry, the doctor no longer makes diagnoses."

• •

setback to the American anti-Taliban effort and to Pakistan's hopes of forming a broad-based new government in Afghanistan. One of Haq's close friends, Kurt Lohbeck, a former stringer for CBS Television who covered the Afghan-Soviet war for years, acknowledged in a telephone interview that Haq, who prided himself on his independence, had been on a temporary assignment for the C.I.A. at the time of his death, although he "never worked with them, for them, or loved them." Lohbeck told me, "He had two or three top Taliban people who were willing to defect, and he was going in with C.I.A. support and money to get these guys." Instead, he was double-crossed by the Taliban. "I'm furious at the C.I.A.," Lohbeck said. "They didn't provide operational security."

As Osama bin Laden continued to elude the American forces, there was talk in the Pentagon and the White House last week of lowered expectations. A high-level former intelligence official talked about how the air attacks had "contained" bin Laden and the Taliban leadership, rather than about the prospect of actually capturing him. Bin Laden, one senior general told me, may not be dead, "but he's hiding in a cave at six thousand feet freezing his ass off." The former State Department official acknowledged that the air attacks thus far had not been a success and added, "What worries me is if, a month from now, bin Laden gets on Al-Jazeera and thumbs his nose at us. It'd be a huge loss of prestige for the United States."

The White House's Afghanistan dilemma, and the risks of its war, were clearly spelled out last week in a speech given by Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., a Democrat and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "The President has not been as blunt as I'm going to be," Biden told a meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations. "Pakistan may very well, and Musharraf may, in fact, collapse. It may be gone. . . . If that were the case, we would find ourselves with a whole hell of a lot more forces in the region than we have now."

Biden asked rhetorically, "How much longer does the bombing continue? Because we're going to pay an escalating price in the Muslim world. We're going to pay an escalating price in the region. And that in fact is going to make the aftermath of our 'victory' more difficult. . . . I hope to God it ends sooner rather than later." Biden also had these words for the Musharraf regime: "We have to make clear to the Pakistanis that, notwithstanding the fact that we need you very much right now . . . if you are going to continue to foment the terror that does exist in Kashmir, then you are operating against your own near-term interests, because that very viper can turn on you."

Biden came as close as any Democrat has come since September 11th to straightforward criticism of President Bush's war aims. The White House had no specific response, but Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, a Republican from Illinois, depicted Biden's public skepticism about the bombing as "completely irresponsible." In a statement, Hastert said that the "American people want us to bring these terrorists to justice. They do not want comments that may bring comfort to our enemies."

The crisis may bring into play the élite unit, operating under Pentagon control with C.I.A. assistance, whose mission it is to destroy nuclear facilities, past and present government officials told me. "They're good," one American said. "If they screw up, they die. They've had good success in proving the negative"—that is, in determining that suspected facilities were not nuclear-related.

The American team is apparently getting help from Israel's most successful special-operations unit, the storied Sayeret Matkal, also known as Unit 262, a deep-penetration unit that has been involved in assassinations, the theft of foreign signals-intelligence materials, and the theft and destruction of foreign nuclear weaponry. Sayeret Matkal's most memorable operation took place in June, 1976, when Lieutenant Colonel Jonathon Netanyahu, brother of the future Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, led a team that stormed a hijacked Air France airliner that was forced down by Palestinian terrorists at Entebbe International Airport, in Uganda, after taking off from Tel Aviv with two hundred and fifty-seven passengers. Jonathon Netanyahu was killed in the raid, along with two of the hostages, but the operation is still considered one of the most successful and audacious in modern history. Members of the Israeli unit arrived in the United States a few days after Septem-

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ber 11th, an informed source said, and as of last week were training with American special-forces units at undisclosed locations.

In recent weeks, the Administration has been reviewing and "refreshing" its contingency plans. Such operations depend on intelligence, however, and there is disagreement within the Administration about the quality of the C.I.A.'s data. The American intelligence community cannot be sure, for example, that it knows the precise whereabouts of every Pakistani warhead—or whether all the warheads that it has found are real. "They've got some dummy locations," an official told me. "You only get one chance, and then you've tried and failed. The cat is out of the bag."

Some senior officials say they remain confident that the intelligence community can do its job, despite the efforts of the Pakistani Army to mask its nuclear arsenal. "We'd be challenged to manage the problem, but there is contingency planning for that possibility," one Bush military adviser told me last week. "We can't exclude the possibility that the Pakistanis could make it harder for us to act on what we know, but that's an operational detail. We're going to have to work harder to get to it quickly. We still have some good access."

A senior military officer, after confirming that intense planning for the possible "exfiltration" of Pakistani warheads was under way, said that he had been concerned not about a military coup but about a localized insurrection by a clique of I.S.I. officers in the field who had access to a nuclear storage facility. "The Pakistanis have just as much of a vested interest as we do in making sure that that stuff is looked after, because if they"—I.S.I. dissidents—"throw one at India, they're all cooked meat." He was referring to the certainty of Indian nuclear retaliation: India's nuclear warheads are more numerous, more sophisticated, and more powerful than Pakistan's; its Army is twice as large; and its population is more than seven times as large.

The skeptics among intelligence and military officials, however, worry that there may not be enough reliable information about the location of all elements of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal. The C.I.A., they note, provided effective information on the warheads in the late nineteen-eighties and early nineties, when it worked closely with the Pakistani military in Afghanistan. At that time, the United States was a major supplier of arms and military technology to Pakistan. The agency recruited informants inside the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, and the National Security Agency found a way to intercept the back-channel communications of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, the German-educated metallurgist who had run Pakistan's nuclear laboratories since the nineteen-seventies and is known as the father of the Pakistani bomb. But those assets no longer exist.

"We lost our interest in that area, and we do not have the same level of contact or knowledge that we once did," a former high-level C.I.A. officer said. "Today, there is a whole set of information that, when it comes down to it, we don't have. We can't count warheads. We never had the capacity to count. What we did have was a capacity to produce unusual material"—on the general state of the Pakistani arsenal. "The idea that you know where the warheads are at any given moment is not right," he said. "As the operation approaches and the question 'How certain are you?' is asked, it becomes more difficult. The fact is, we usually know hours later. We never could do it in real time."

Other officials expressed concern about what any team sent to Pakistan could really accomplish without risking significant casualties. "How are you going to conduct a covert commando operation in the middle of the country?" the former high-level State Department official said. "We don't know where this stuff is, and it would take far more than a commando operation to get at it."

A government expert on Pakistan's nuclear capabilities depicted the issue in strategic terms: "The United States has to look at a new doctrine. Our nuclear strategy has to incorporate the fact that we might have a nuclear-armed fundamentalist government in Pakistan. Even if we know where the weapons are now, it doesn't mean we'll know where they are if the fundamentalists take over. And after Pakistan it could be Iran and Iraq. These are countries that support state terrorism." Intelligence officials told me they believe that, in case of an imminent

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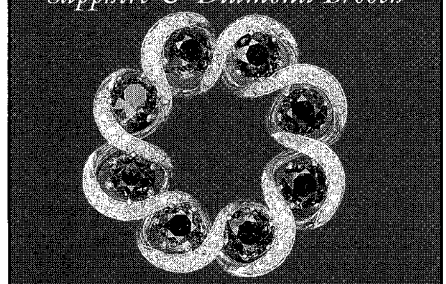

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threat, the Indian military's special commando unit is preparing to make its own move on the Pakistani arsenal.

Kashmir remains, as always, an issue that could spark a general war in South Asia. The territory, on the northern border of India, spanning the Himalayas, has been a subject of dispute since 1947, when Britain's withdrawal from the subcontinent led to the partition of the Raj into India and Pakistan. In 1949, a ceasefire brokered by the United Nations placed about two-thirds of Kashmir, whose population was seventy-five per cent Muslim, under the control of India, and gave nominal control of the remaining third to Pakistan. A U.N. resolution called for a plebiscite to allow the people of Kashmir to vote on their political fate, but India has not permitted the election to take place, insisting that Pakistan must first withdraw its troops. Pakistan refused to do so unless India also withdrew. Over the years, India has taken advantage of the impasse by increasing military and political control over its mandated area of Kashmir, infuriating the Muslims there.

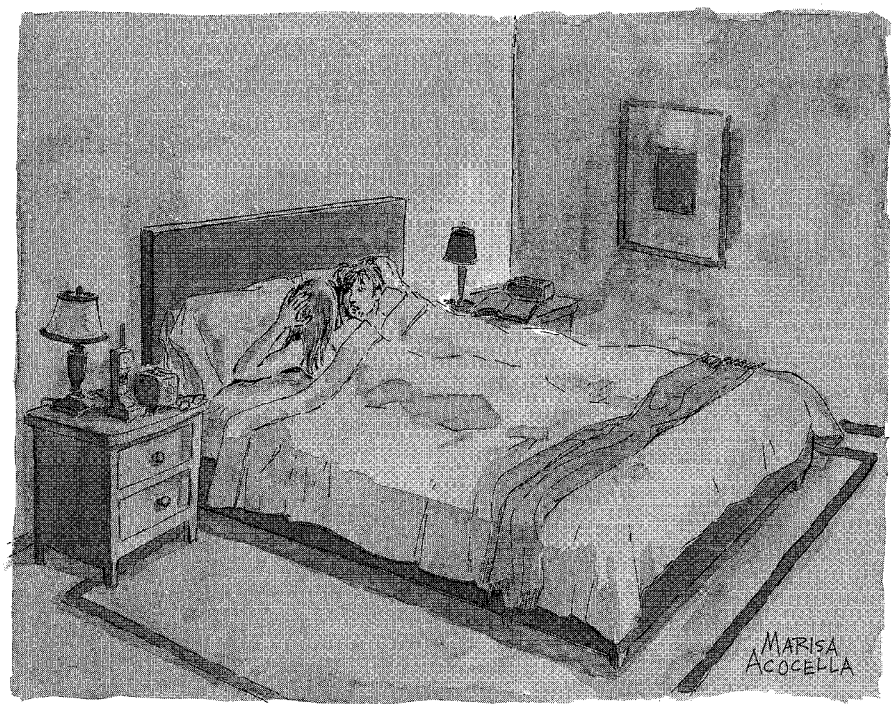
The ancestral home of the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Kashmir has a revered status for Indians, and many believe that their country needs to hold on to the Muslim region in order to maintain its identity as a secular nation. Pakistanis believe that Kashmir, because of the Muslim predominance, should have become part of their nation at Partition. For most Indians and Pakistanis, it is an issue beyond political compromise, and Pakistan has responded to India's insistent presence by sponsoring terrorism in an effort to foment revolution. The two countries have gone to war over Kashmir twice, each time without a clear resolution.

India has had a tactical atomic bomb since the nineteen-seventies, and Pakistan's became operational in the late nineteen-eighties, although Pakistani leaders denied this fact for years. The Kashmiri dispute first veered close to nuclear confrontation in 1990. That spring, the American National Security Agency was monitoring what seemed to be yet another slowly escalating series of Pakistani and Indian attacks, when intercepts revealed that the Pakistani leadership had "panicked," as a senior intelligence official put it, at the prospect of a preëmptive Indian strike and had readied its small arsenal of nuclear warheads. (The previous fall, the Bush Administration had assured Congress that Pakistan did not possess such weapons—although it knew better—in order to gain continued approval for military aid to the country.)

The crisis was resolved after American diplomats intervened. Afterward, intelligence analysts concluded that the leadership in both nations was willing to run any risk, including that of nuclear war, to avoid political or military defeat in Kashmir. There was another scare in 1999, a year after both India and Pakistan successfully tested warheads. The situation was defused only with help from President Clinton. Conditions are no more stable now. Terrorists operating out of training camps believed to be armed and financed in part by the I.S.I. continue to hit Indian targets, while India is known to have conducted deep-penetration raids against terrorist camps in Pakistan. A nuclear-threat assessment published last January by the Secretary of Defense bleakly concluded, "Given the long-standing hostility between the two countries, even a minor conflict runs the risk of escalating into an exchange of missiles with nuclear warheads."

Several weeks ago, on October 1st, Islamic terrorists exploded a car bomb near the state-legislature building in Srinagar, Kashmir, killing at least thirty-eight people, more than half of them civilians, and wounding scores of others. In a conversation last week, a former high-level Pakistani diplomat noted that although the bombing attracted widespread attention in the United States, its underlying significance and its links to the broader war on terrorism were not fully understood. "The terrorists are not ignorant," the diplomat explained. "The state legislature represents the link with Delhi, and hitting it symbolizes a rejection of the Indian Constitution." Two weeks after the car bombing, the Indians responded by shelling military positions across the ceasefire line. The Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, whose political party is facing an important state election early next year, also brought back as Defense Minister George Fernandes, a hard-liner who had been removed from office in March after a bribery scandal. In his first press conference, Fernandes warned, "When it comes to punishing the enemy, we will hold back nothing."

India's rhetoric has not softened since then. Speculation about whether Musharraf is buying support, and time, from his antagonists within the I.S.I.



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by acquiescing to the guerrilla excursions inside Kashmir has become a repeated theme in Indian newspapers and in conversations with Indian diplomats. Another terrorist attack, on October 22nd, this time on an Indian airbase in Kashmir, failed when a group of would-be suicide bombers were killed in a shoot-out, but the event—it was the first time an airbase had been targeted—led Vajpayee to reject an offer from Musharraf to hold talks. Musharraf responded by warning darkly that Pakistan was "not a small country." That tense exchange made it clear that Secretary of State Colin Powell's highly visible visits to Pakistan and India, during which he urged both sides to resolve their differences over Kashmir through negotiation, had failed to ease the situation.

Two weeks ago, Richard N. Haass, the director of the Office of Policy Planning, was designated as the State Department's point man on the future of Afghanistan. Haass, who immediately scheduled a round of briefings on the situation in Pakistan, was a logical choice: he had been involved, as a junior White House aide, in the successful 1990 effort to prevent India and Pakistan from going to war over Kashmir.

Some of the officials I spoke to believed that India would not be the one to start a war. Last week, the Bush Administration was said to have obtained assurances of restraint from the Vajpayee government. (The Prime Minister, who cancelled a scheduled visit to the United Nations last month in the wake of the September 11th attacks, is scheduled to meet with President Bush in early November.) "The Indians are much stronger than the Pakistanis," a former high-ranking government official said. A cross-border invasion into Pakistan would be against India's interests, he said, because it would "force Musharraf's hand": if he responded, it would trigger a wider war; if he failed to respond, it could provoke a coup that would topple him. "Either way, India is worse off." He added, however, that the Indian government and its military and intelligence agencies remain deeply divided over how to proceed in Kashmir. "India could feel sufficiently provoked to preëmpt militarily," he said.

Referring to the air and ground war against bin Laden and the Taliban in Afghanistan, the former high-ranking government official, who has direct knowledge of the situation, said, "The Bush Administration is so focussed on the target and the objective that it's lost its peripheral vision. If Musharraf is toppled in a coup, or fears he'll be toppled, or, as a price for not being toppled, gives the I.S.I. permission to ratchet it up in Kashmir, that's very dangerous." (Neither the White House nor the State Department responded to a request for comment. A C.I.A. official who was asked to comment described the questions I raised as "policy issues," and added, "We don't do policy. I have nothing for you.")

A Pakistani diplomat I talked to last week acknowledged that the "situation is explosive." Much of the current dilemma, he told me, stemmed from the Reagan Administration's decision to finance many of today's I.S.I. and Taliban leaders in their successful war against the Soviet Union. "At one time, it was a three-way game," the former diplomat said. "The C.I.A., the I.S.I., and the mujahideen were creating these Frankensteins"—the Taliban—"and now the C.I.A. has pulled out, but you can't totally destroy the Frankensteins."

Another American intelligence official pointed out that Vajpayee, like Musharraf, was in a delicate position. "Vajpayee is under pressure to take out the camps in Pakistan and in the staging areas," the official said. The Prime Minister and his External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, were "holding back the dam, but now that Fernandes is back Singh has lost influence," the official told me. "All the major figures in India said, 'We're not going to go across,' but that's if nothing else breaks out."

The former State Department official said that Musharraf, eager to find a way to justify the war to the Pakistani public, has sought in talks with U.S. officials to provide Pakistan's support in exchange for an American commitment to endorse the Pakistani position in Kashmir. The senior intelligence analyst confirmed that Indians had been

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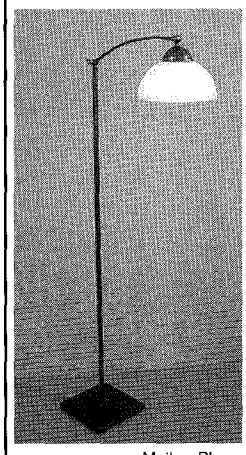
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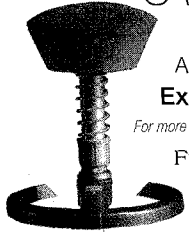
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alarmed by the muted private response of the Bush Administration to the October 1st bombing incident in Kashmir. "I've seen tough messages to the Pakistanis—'Keep these guys under control,' " he noted, but that message was not sent this time. He went on, "The I.S.I. is being allowed by Musharraf to develop policies of its own—to run Afghan policy and Kashmir policy. And that's where the danger is, if we continue to push the Indians. What would happen if there's another attack like October 1st?" Referring to the senior managers of the Bush Administration, the intelligence analyst said, "Americans have underestimated Indian anger—underestimated the degree of anti-Pakistan feeling that has developed inside India."

Not everyone in the intelligence community believes that Musharraf could stop the cross-border activity even if he wanted to. "I doubt he is encouraging these attacks in Kashmir," a former official said. "But it's very hard for him to control it. He's not going to alienate the I.S.I.—he's going to need them if and when it comes to stopping a demonstration. He has less control than Arafat has over the terrorists in the West Bank."

"Nitrogen and glycerine are being shaken up here," the former high-ranking government official said. "The Pakistanis are the small, scared ones. And they might use nuclear weapons as an equalizer. The danger is that the fifty-year dynamic between India and Pakistan is the backdrop for a scenario in which someone could hit a button."

In a CNN television interview with Larry King last week, Musharraf dismissed the American concerns about the integrity of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, depicting them as the thoughts of those in the West "who don't really understand the reality of Pakistan. . . . We have an excellent command-and-control system which we have evolved, and there is no question of their falling into the hands of any fundamentalists." However, in an interview last year with Jeffrey Goldberg, Musharraf described the arsenal's command-and-control mechanism as consisting of "a geographic separation between the warhead and the missile. . . . In order to arm the missile, the warhead would have to be moved by truck over a certain distance. I don't see any chance of this restraint being broken." He would not say how far apart the warhead and its launching missile were, or who controlled the system on a minute-to-minute basis.

"That's not a command-and-control system," one American intelligence expert subsequently told me. "You always keep the weapons separate." Musharraf's description, he added, "is like the argument the Pakistanis used to use in the late nineteen-eighties and early nineteen-nineties that they did not have a bomb because they hadn't put the components together." The intelligence expert also suggested that the Musharraf account was not credible. "What happens in a crisis? Are you going to have to drive warheads to the delivery vehicles? And leave you vulnerable to an enemy strike? A real command-and-control system allows you to have them ready to go, but always under the control of the leadership."

One longtime C.I.A. operative who served under cover in South Asia argued that Musharraf is simply telling Washington what it wants to hear. "Why should he tell us the truth?" the operative said. "He's fighting for his life. We sit there dumbly listening to him, and it's wrong."

Pakistani military officials have approached Pentagon officials several times in the past decade in an unsuccessful attempt to get support for an upgrading of Pakistan's nuclear command-and-control mechanisms. Senior military and proliferation officials in the Clinton Administration told me, however, that they had determined that such assistance was barred by the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, ratified in 1968, which prohibits declared nuclear states from providing any support or guidance to any emerging nuclear power. One former Pentagon official caustically depicted the Clinton Administration's Pakistani command-and-control debate as being similar to the debate over condoms in high schools and needle exchanges: "If you give out condoms, are you condoning teen-age sex? If you give out needles, are you condoning drugs? By helping with command-and-control, are you condoning nuclear weapons?" ♦

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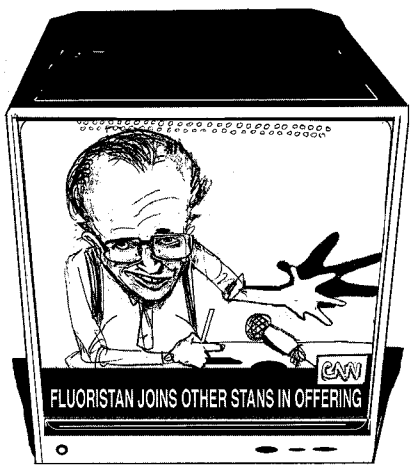
SHOUTS & MURMURS

DOING THE CNN CRAWL

BY DANIEL MENAKER

Tokyo Nikkei average shows little movement in last half hour, yen falls slightly against the dollar, bows and apologizes . . . Fluoristan joins other Stans in offering airbases for U.S. military use . . . American Epilepsy Foundation voices concern over "welter of visual stimuli" on CNN . . . Citing "unfortunate subliminal aural associations,"



president of Amtrak changes organization's name to USRail . . . Greta Van Susteren offers one-hour interview slot, body to soldier who captures or kills Osama bin Laden . . . Tokyo Nikkei index stirs, attempts to shrug off its lethargy . . . Tropical Storm Cassandra upgraded to hurricane, drifts aimlessly out to middle of Atlantic . . . CNN crawl writers seek wider literary latitude . . . Taliban raids few remaining costume shops in Kabul and Kandahar, seizes nation's entire inventory of false beards . . . Hurricane Cassandra showing lovely galaxies of swirling clouds in mid-ocean . . . In patriotic gesture, Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft asks Congress to pass law allowing him to wiretap himself . . . Nikkei index as becalmed as a slumbering infant—no, that's not very good—as a, well, something very calm, we don't have time . . . Should Catholic Church waive guidelines, beatify Rudolph Giuliani before he leaves office? Vote at CNN.com . . . British Prime Minister Tony Blair literally carried away by own words in address to Parliament, falls down into backbenches, will be tethered during all future speeches . . . Airline industry, a wounded beast trying to rise to its once glorious feet in the tree-dense, leopard-ridden jungle of global commerce, petitions Gorgon-like government agencies for more subsidies . . . Visigoth-like CNN execs announce crackdown on "amateur lyricism" of CNN crawl writer . . . Shakespeare scholar Harold Bloom signs seven-figure book deal for comparative study of Caliban and the Taliban, actor Bob Balaban voices concern about project . . . Nikkei index trembles like the leaves in the tree-dense jungle troubled by a humid, fevered breeze . . . Philistine CNN management orders elimination of all similes, metaphors from CNN crawl writing . . . Philosophers at annual ontology convention in Tucson debate existence of Dick Cheney . . . CNN crawl writers join with Fox News crawl writers and MSNBC crawl writers in protest of crackdown on literary efforts, all groups plead for lowercase letters and halved crawl rate, plan crawl-writing awards ceremony at end of year . . . So many things are happening that it's like a landscape underlaid with underground streams and rivers, bearing what dark messages down to the sea we cannot now nor ever know . . . CNN management, obviously resentful of the burgeoning cultural importance of crawl writers because they represent the stylistic future of the art, as opposed to the hopelessly pre-Holocene so-called classicism of dried-out telegramese that has held back the aesthetic evolution of the form like cruel fetters on a mighty steed, announces immediate dismissal and lockout of all unliteral-minded CNN crawl writers, Authors Guild voices concern. ♦

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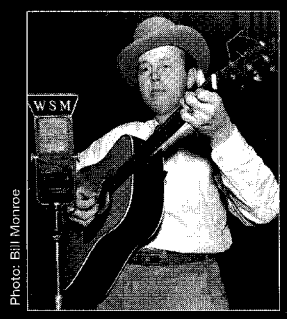

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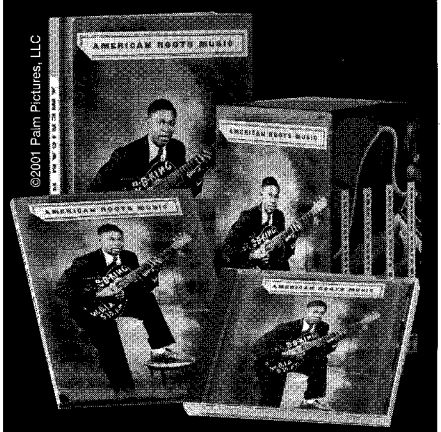

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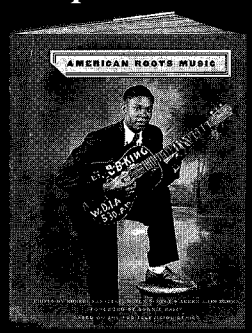

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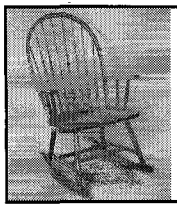

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ANNALS OF LAW

CRACKDOWN

Should we be worried about the new antiterrorism legislation?

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

As an Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division, Michael Chertoff is entitled to one of the great old suites in the Justice Department Building—an office with soaring windows, deep-pile carpet, and built-in bookcases. The décor is haute prosecutor: an inscribed photograph of Justice William Brennan, Jr., for whom Chertoff clerked; courtroom sketches of Chertoff facing Fat Tony Salerno, the mobster, and Crazy Eddie Antar, the onetime appliance dealer; and Chertoff's official commission, signed by the first President Bush, from his days as United States Attorney in New Jersey.

Chertoff is forty-seven years old, nearly bald, with a wispy beard, and he has a fluid self-confidence that suggests he hasn't been at a loss for words since kindergarten. Since the September 11th terrorist attacks, Chertoff's office has become the funnel for what is probably the most important criminal investigation in American history, as prosecutors and F.B.I. investigators pour in to seek the boss's approval. What leads can we use from the search of a hijacker's car in Portland, Maine? Where do the hijackers' credit-card records lead? Who are we holding on immigration charges? How long can we detain material witnesses? For day-to-day decisions, Chertoff has the last word.

As it happens, Chertoff was the senior Justice Department official on duty at the F.B.I. command center right after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the experience has informed his subsequent actions. "The thing we kept thinking about was whether there were other planes out there," Chertoff told me recently. "Until two or three in the afternoon, the main priority was making sure there would not be another attack on any more planes." Thanks in part to phone calls from flight attendants and passengers, who identified the hijackers by their seat numbers, the F.B.I. quickly learned most of their names. The tie to Middle Eastern terrorism—specifically, to the network of Osama bin Laden—came almost as fast.

"In past terrorist investigations, you usually had a defined event and you're investigating it after the fact," Chertoff said. "That's not what we had here. This is not Tim McVeigh. It's not even World Trade Center I"—the bombing of the towers in 1993—"where things stabilized after a period of time. We have an organization that never says, 'We've done this, we're done, it's the end of the war.' From the start, there was every reason to believe that there is more to come. You have to assume that there might be an Act II that could come down very quickly. So we thought that we were getting information to prevent more attacks, which was even more important than trying any case that came out of the attacks." By midafternoon of September 11th, Attorney General John Ashcroft had cut short an out-of-town trip and returned to Washington to take charge, but Chertoff had set the tone for the law-enforcement reaction on that day and in the weeks that followed.

Great national traumas tend to transform federal law enforcement, and that is likely to happen in the aftermath of September 11th. The changes, initiated by Chertoff and his colleagues, were reflected first in the investigation of the attacks themselves and then in the antiterrorism legislation that Congress passed, and President Bush signed, last week. In the past, threats to the nation have prompted significant restrictions on civil liberties; among the most notorious episodes were the Red scare and the Palmer raids, after the First World War; the internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War; and the wiretapping and

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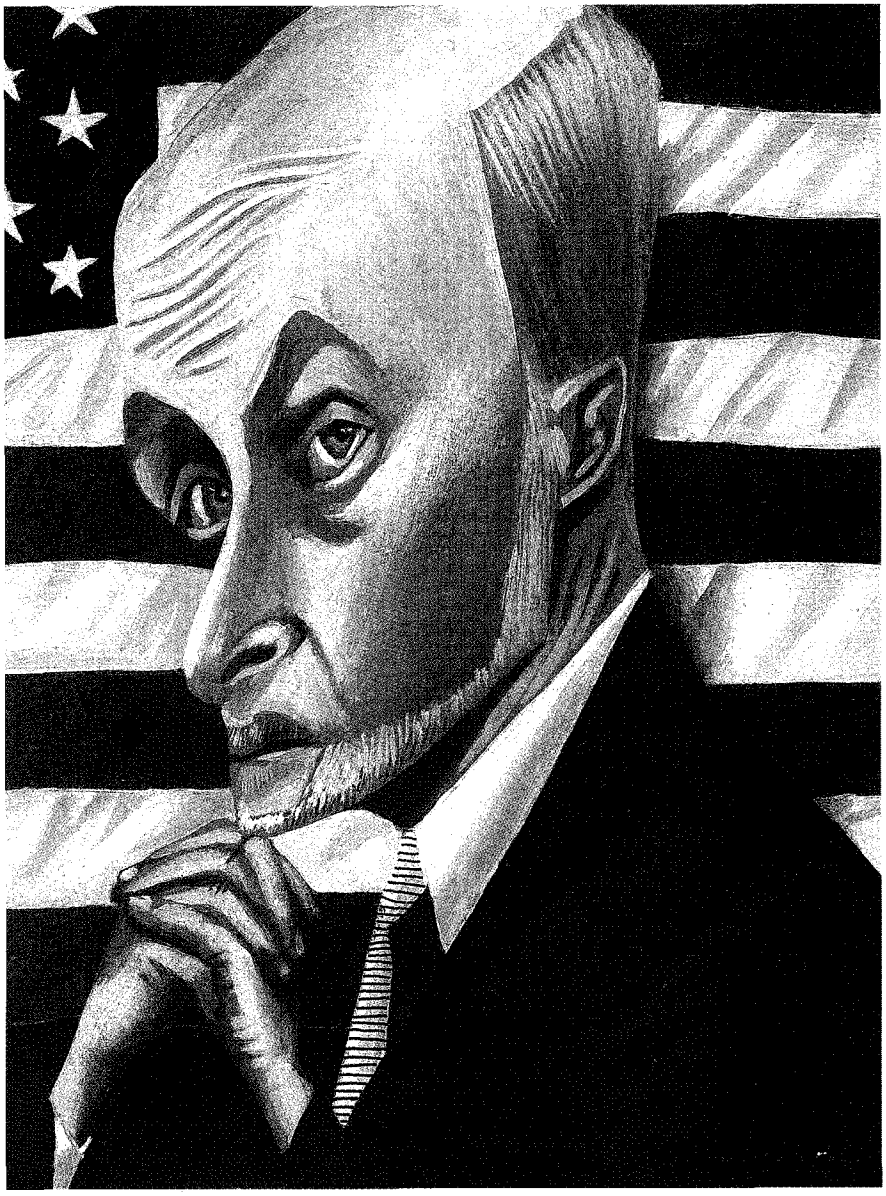
harassment of government critics in the wake of the Vietnam War. Against this background, the Bush Administration is beginning to write an important part of its legacy.

Compared with some darker periods in American history, the country is not facing a new wave of repression. The emphasis today is clearly on preventing further terrorist acts. But the traditional meticulous, step-by-step F.B.I. investigation is giving way to quick decisions to detain people on any available grounds: immigration violations, material-witness warrants—anything to defuse potential threats. This switch in tactics is moving in tandem with changes in criminal law itself. The new antiterrorism bill, passed after minimal hearings and debate, breaks down Cold War-era barriers between foreign intelligence and domestic law enforcement to an unprecedented degree. The Justice Department and other agencies will be permitted to move faster, probe deeper, and strike harder at those suspected of terrorist activities. The corresponding worry is whether these changes will reduce the threat of terror or raise the level of fear that citizens feel toward their own government.



MARK ULRIKSEN

Michael Chertoff has led the changes in federal law enforcement since September 11th.

Michael Chertoff grew up in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the son of a rabbi and a homemaker. Shortly after graduating from Harvard Law School, in 1978, where he served as a model for an intense and brilliant character in his

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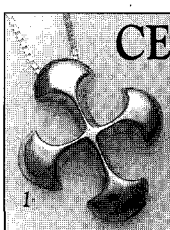

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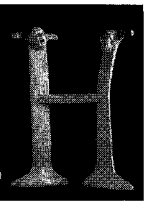

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classmate Scott Turow's book "One L," Chertoff was hired as an Assistant United States Attorney in Manhattan. There, in 1985, courtesy of Rudolph Giuliani, who was then the United States Attorney, he got his big break.

Giuliani chose Chertoff as his principal assistant in the most important organized-crime trial in history: the bosses of the five major New York Mafia families, known collectively as the Commission, were charged with operating a racketeering enterprise—specifically, controlling the local cement business. Just before the trial, however, Giuliani decided to leave the Commission case in order to lead the prosecution of a municipal corruption scandal. Chertoff, though still a mid-level assistant, became the top prosecutor in the Commission case, with its colorful cast of defendants, which included not only Fat Tony Salerno but also Tony Ducks Corallo and Junior Persico. (I met Chertoff when I worked as a summer intern on the Commission prosecution team.) All the defendants were convicted. Years later, according to an article in *The American Lawyer*, a police sergeant told Salerno, a former Genovese family boss, that Chertoff's career was flourishing. Salerno responded, "Well, you give him a little message from Fat Tony. You tell that son of a bitch he owes me a thank-you note."

Chertoff then took a senior position in the United States Attorney's office in New Jersey; in 1990, he was appointed the top federal prosecutor in the state, where he had a successful four-year run, highlighted by his prosecution of Crazy Eddie, the once ubiquitous electronics retailer, in a multimillion-dollar racketeering and fraud case. He spent the next half-dozen years in private practice, until Ashcroft summoned him to the Justice Department.

At Ashcroft's direction, Chertoff supervised the investigation that has led to the incarceration of nine hundred and twenty-one people since September 11th. "We started with the hijackers, their credit-card records, their phone records, and peeled back the onion from there," Chertoff told me. "As you run across people who appear to have some association with them, you frankly look at them to see if they had some involvement in the plot, whether they were witting or unwitting." Almost all these charges have been brought in secret proceedings, which makes it difficult to assess whether the government has overstepped its authority. Many of the nine hundred and twenty-one are being held for immigration violations; others are being detained as material witnesses, who may have relevant information and may be held indefinitely, even without an allegation of wrongdoing. (Federal judges must approve the detention of material witnesses, and in the past some judges have allowed them to be imprisoned for as long as six months.) "We were determined not to allow anyone to walk away if they had any connection to the hijackers," Chertoff said. "We're clearly not standing on ceremony, and if there is a basis to hold them we're going to hold them."

To round up these suspects and witnesses, the government is relying on laws that have long been on the books. Violators of immigration laws, such as those who overstay their visas, have always been subject to detention; and prosecutors have always had the power to hold material witnesses. The current investigation, so far, reflects a change in emphasis and focus, rather than a more dramatic change in kind. But the Bush Administration, with the assistance of Congress, is attempting a more sweeping transformation of the criminal law; and that, too, began taking shape right after the attacks.

As the Administration's antiterrorism proposals worked their way through Congress this fall, Chertoff had one awkward moment. Senator Paul Sarbanes, the Maryland Democrat, welcomed Chertoff as he was about to testify before a banking subcommittee, saying, "Michael, I just have to add, it's nice to have you back before the committee in a different capacity, if I may note, than your previous appearances."

This was a reference to a temporary assignment that Chertoff had taken in 1995 as special counsel to Senator Alfonse D'Amato's investigation of the Whitewater affair for the Banking Committee. It was not a successful chapter in Chertoff's (or D'Amato's) career; much time was spent considering Clinton conspiracy theories—for instance, belaboring the Vincent Foster suicide. The Whitewater job also marked a sort of coming out as a Republican for Chertoff, who had previously cultivated an apolitical reputation. (It also won him an important future patron in then Senator Ashcroft.) But mostly the job taught Chertoff a good deal about getting along in Washington.

In drafting the antiterrorist legislation, Chertoff and his colleagues tried to address a long-standing anomaly: since the nineteen-seventies, surveillance related to foreign intelligence operated by one set of rules, and investigations for domestic law enforcement went by another. The F.B.I. generally conducted both kinds of surveillance, but the results of these investigations could be shared by two parts of the same agency only under limited circumstances. To Chertoff, this was absurd.

"Information-sharing is far and away the most significant issue that needed to be addressed," he told me. "It's mind-boggling that information exists in the U.S., even in the F.B.I., and it's not being used to protect people. You can't divide the world any longer into intelligence defense on the one hand and law enforcement on the other. You have foreign powers that are engaged in terrorist activities. The way we stop them from doing bad things is to arrest and convict them. On September 11th, we realized that we couldn't debate it philosophically anymore."

Chertoff's attempt to dismantle the barriers between foreign intelligence and law enforcement has drawn criticism from civil libertarians. "It's always been clear that if you want to do a search for law-enforcement purposes, you need to show probable cause and get a search warrant from a magistrate," said Morton Halperin, a longtime defense expert and former Clinton Administration official. "But foreign intelligence was different. For decades, the way the bureau did foreign-intelligence operations was without any authorization at all. They uttered the words 'national security' and they tapped anything they wanted. But then in the seventies, as a result of Watergate and the Supreme Court saying that wire-

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taps were covered by the Fourth Amendment, there was a problem. The phone companies would no longer coöperate with the F.B.I. unless there was some regularized scheme. Everyone knew there had to be a system put in place."

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), signed into law by President Carter in 1978, established that system. "In the discussions leading up to the passage of FISA, the government said when we tap the Russian Embassy we're not looking for crimes; we're looking for what they're saying back to Moscow. The purpose is not to indict anybody but just to gather intelligence information," said Halperin, who was then affiliated with the American Civil Liberties Union. Under FISA, the intelligence agencies had to establish only that the targets of their surveillance were agents of a "foreign power." (The F.B.I. seeks these warrants in secret proceedings before a FISA court of seven federal judges.)

In a world defined by the Cold War, the distinction between foreign intelligence and law enforcement made sense. Occasionally, government lawyers would want to use what they had learned in FISA taps in prosecutions for espionage, and courts allowed it—if the "primary purpose" of the surveillance was for intelligence. But terrorism—and especially the events of September 11th—scrambled the rules. If the government picked up evidence of a crime, particularly a terrorist crime, in a foreign-intelligence tap, how could that information be withheld from prosecutors? What if that distinction had inadvertently led to the suppression of information about the impending attacks on America?

Last August, a flight school in Minnesota told the F.B.I. that Zacarias Moussaoui, a thirty-three-year-old French Moroccan, wanted to learn how to steer a jetliner but not how to take off and land. This bizarre request, plus Moussaoui's offer to pay the eight-thousand-dollar tuition in cash, prompted the bureau to detain him on August 17th, when he was found to have violated immigration laws. A trace on Moussaoui's name with French intelligence officials revealed that he had connections to "radical Islamic extremists" and that he had recently travelled to Pakistan, and possibly Afghanistan. In light of this, local

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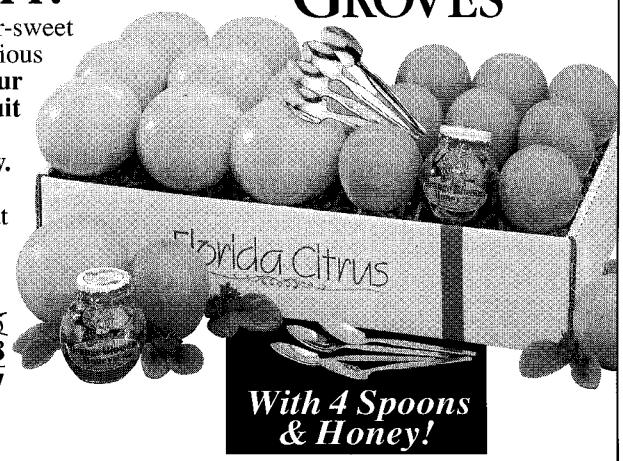

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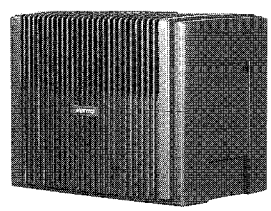

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agents asked headquarters if they could obtain a FISA search warrant for the hard drive on Moussaoui's computer. The F.B.I. denied the request.

"What happened with Moussaoui was that the bureau felt they had insufficient evidence to show he was a foreign agent under FISA," a government investigator familiar with the matter told me. "And even if they did go ahead under FISA, any evidence they got might have been tainted in a criminal case down the road." After the attacks, investigators did obtain access to Moussaoui's computer, where there was information about crop dusting but nothing to suggest that he was involved in the September 11th attacks. There were rumors that Moussaoui was supposed to have participated in the hijackings, but evidence to support that is in dispute, as is his over-all connection to the terrorist underground. Moussaoui remains in federal custody.

The Moussaoui case, though, does illustrate how convoluted the current system is. A General Accounting Office study of the relationship between foreign-intelligence and law-enforcement investigations, released in July, also noted that coördination between the F.B.I. and the Department of Justice was imperfect at best. The Administration's proposed solution to this problem looked, on the surface, almost semantic. Previously, the government could seek FISA surveillance on a subject if *the* purpose of the inquiry was foreign intelligence. Chertoff and his colleagues proposed that FISA surveillance be allowed if foreign intelligence was *a* purpose of the inquiry.

When I remarked to Chertoff that this change sounded legalistic, he replied, "It may sound that way, but we're operating against a twenty-five-year history with the law. The language has given rise to a mind-set where people feel forced to choose between one kind of investigation and the other. But we can't make that choice anymore."

Morton Halperin (and many others) does not think the change is merely semantic, and the prospect of a merger of intelligence and law-enforcement surveillance worries him. "What people have to understand is that there is a lower standard to getting FISA taps," he said. "You don't have to show probable cause; you basically just have to ask for them. And, unlike a law-enforcement tap, the government never has to tell the subject that they've done it. If the government thinks you're under the control of a foreign government, they can wiretap you and never tell you, search your house and never tell you, break into your home, copy your hard drive, and never tell you that they've done it."

Halperin has firsthand knowledge. When he served on the National Security Council, under Henry Kissinger, beginning in 1969, Kissinger ordered a tap placed on Halperin's home phone for nearly two years to determine if he was leaking information to the press. After Halperin learned about the tap, he sued Kissinger and Nixon, and the legal battle continued for almost two decades. Halperin ultimately received no money damages, but, as part of a settlement, Kissinger wrote him a formal apology. "Historically, the government has often believed that anyone who is protesting government policy is doing it at the behest of a foreign government and opened counterintelligence investigations of them," Halperin said. "We are not just talking about people who are members of active terrorist organizations. You could be supporting the peaceful activities of the I.R.A. or the P.L.O., and they could start in on you."

Only one senator, Russell Feingold, a Wisconsin Democrat, voted against the bill, and he did so in part because he thought that the lower standards of FISA investigations inadequately protected civil liberties. "The law allows regular criminal investigations to be taken into this secret court, which frankly isn't much of a court at all," Feingold told me. "It's the Attorney General's private playground."

When it looked as though Congress would quickly pass the Administration's antiterrorism legislation, the difference between law-and-order conservatives and civil libertarians seemed straightforward enough. But, as it turned out, the terrorism debate shifted when a third group—the libertarian right—took a prominent role. Chertoff confronted this development in September, when he appeared before the House Judiciary Committee, testifying about one of the less controversial sections of the antiterrorism bill, covering orders for pen registers and trap-and-traces. (A pen register identifies all outgoing numbers called by a given telephone; a trap-and-trace identifies the phone numbers of incoming callers, much as caller I.D. does.) Prosecutors have long been able to obtain such orders as a matter of course; the new law seeks to take account of technological advances such as E-mail and other Internet communications.

Bob Goodlatte, a conservative Republican from Virginia, had a question about E-mail. "I'm concerned that the terms 'routing' and 'addressing' need to be clarified to show that the intention of acquiring information about each message is limited to the destination or the termination of such communication"—and does not include any sort of content. Chertoff tried to reassure Goodlatte. "What we're looking for is addresses and

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It was just children playing in the sand
(accompanied by the narcotic scent
of blooming lindens, don't forget),
just children, but after all
the devil, and the minor gods,
and even forgotten politicians,
who'd broken all their promises,
were also there and watched them
with unending rapture.
Who wouldn't want to be a child—
for the last time!

—*Adam Zagajewski*
(Translated, from the Polish, by Clare Cavanagh.)

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information that tells us who sent the material and where the sender is addressing the material. We're not looking to get into content." If the government wants to examine the content of E-mail, Chertoff explained, a judge will require far more evidence of possible criminality than that required for a pen register or a trap-and-trace.

What Chertoff and, later, Ashcroft discovered was that House Republicans—as much as the Democrats—wanted restrictions placed on the government's power to investigate. "We fought the syndrome of presuming that we somehow have to cut back on the Bill of Rights in order to obtain security," Bob Barr, the Georgia Republican, told me. As different versions of the antiterrorism legislation moved through the Republican House and the Democratic Senate, the House produced a final draft that was considerably more sensitive to civil liberties than the version that came out of the Senate.

Recognizing that some kind of legislation was going to pass, the House libertarian caucus settled on a mediating device—a "sunset" provision. After a given number of years, the law would automatically revert to its former status unless Congress reauthorized it. On the Senate side, Patrick Leahy, the Vermont Democrat who chairs the Judiciary Committee, decided to embrace the sunset provision when the bill came to a House-Senate conference, on October 17th. "I like the sunset idea because the F.B.I. generally doesn't pay any attention to oversight from the Congress," Leahy told me. "Now they can't go crazy, or we won't reauthorize the law." The sunset provision will also allow Congress to monitor possible excesses, such as whether the F.B.I. is focussing unduly on Arab-Americans or expanding its surveillance efforts beyond terrorism to investigations of other crimes.

For Chertoff, the sunset provision was a disappointment. "I wish I could say that the sun will set on terrorism in two or three or four years, but it's not, so there's no reason to put that kind of limit on the law," he said. The Bush White House fought the sunset provision to the end, but House Republicans made sure it remained in place. As Leahy recalled the negotiations, "The White House sent this kid to talk about the sunset, and Hastert"—House Speaker Dennis Hastert—"sat there like Buddha listening to him. Finally, he said, 'You go back to the White House and tell them you made your pitch. But the sunset stays.' " In the version passed by Congress, the changes in the law will expire in four years.

Even with the sunset provision, Chertoff and the Administration got most of what they wanted, including the ability to obtain "roving" wiretaps on suspects who are travelling with cell phones or other mobile technology; expansion of pen registers and trap-and-traces to include new technology; and longer sentences for terrorism offenses. And law enforcement will be able to use material gained from FISA surveillance if foreign intelligence was "a significant" purpose of the original investigation. On another controversial provision, Congress modified an Administration proposal that would have allowed unlimited detention of aliens before the government had to specify charges against them; the legislators imposed a seven-day deadline for bringing charges. (Critics of the bill maintain that it still permits the indefinite detention of noncitizens who are suspected of being threats to national security.)

But, in the end, there was a surprising degree of consensus. "There's no question that there has to be a cultural change," Chertoff told me. "In some ways, the glamorous, high-profile cases are not going to be there—for the F.B.I. and for prosecutors. We don't necessarily need to convict people of a grand conspiracy if we can convict them of something straightforward and get them off the street right away." Morton Halperin does not seem troubled by that view. "The basic problem with the F.B.I. is that it's in the business of investigating crime that has already taken place," he said. "They have no culture of analysis or prevention."

Seven weeks after the most murderous terrorist attack in American history, the government has made changes in the law which—at least in this first round of legislation—do not represent a wholesale retreat from civil liberties. "We know what kind of moment this is, and we don't want what we did to be looked back on like it was internment or the Palmer raids," Chertoff told me. "The lessons of history are not lost on us, but we have to adjust to realities that we have never faced before." ♦

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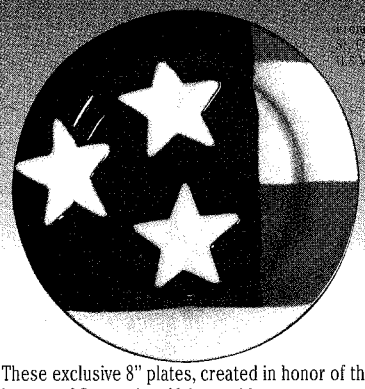

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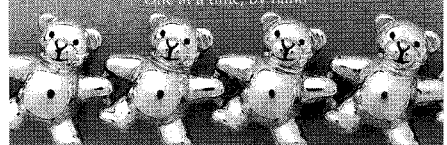

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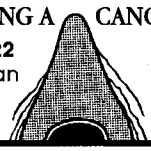

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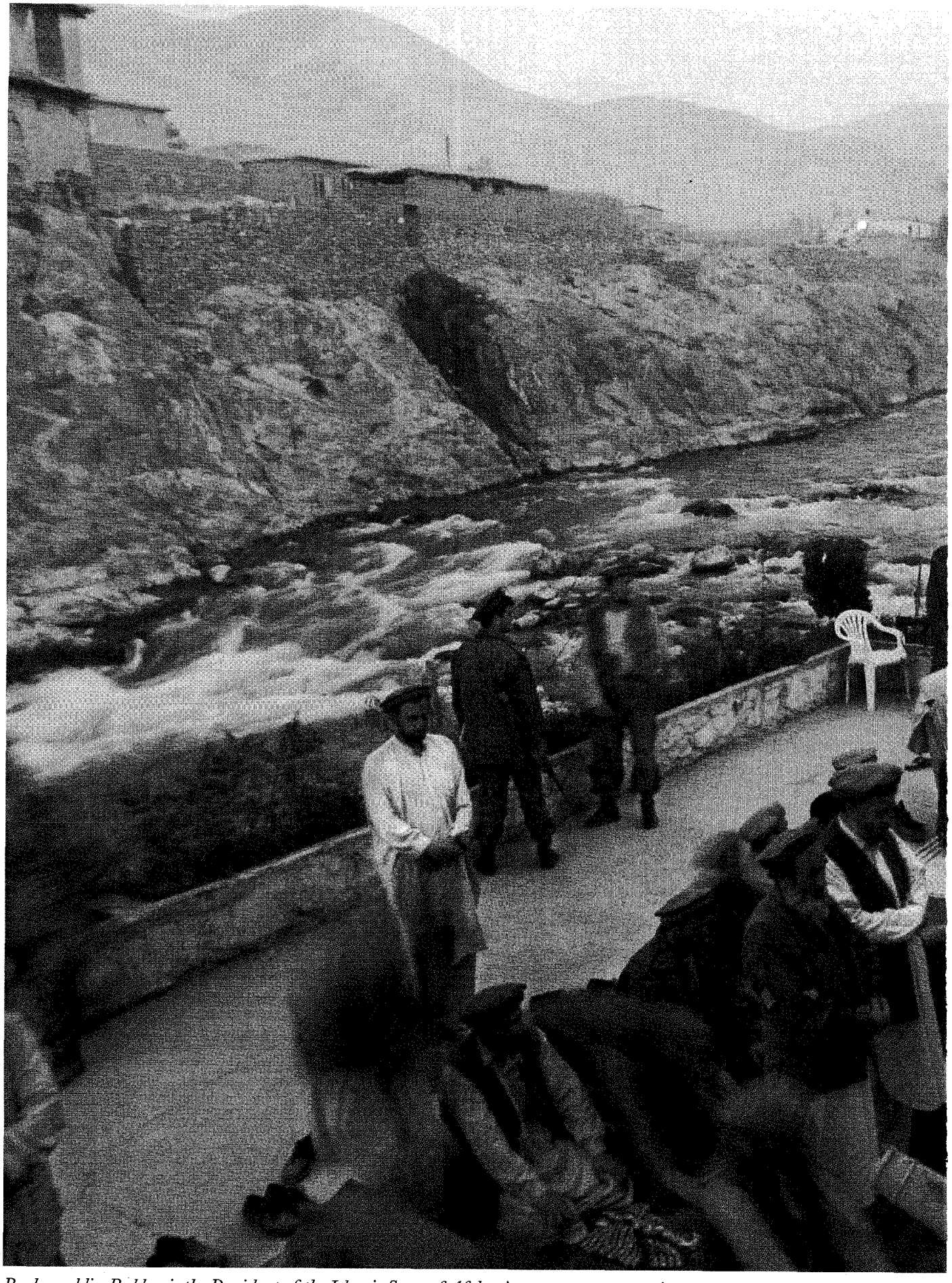

Burhanuddin Rabbani, the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, a government-in-exile, leads a group of mujahideen in

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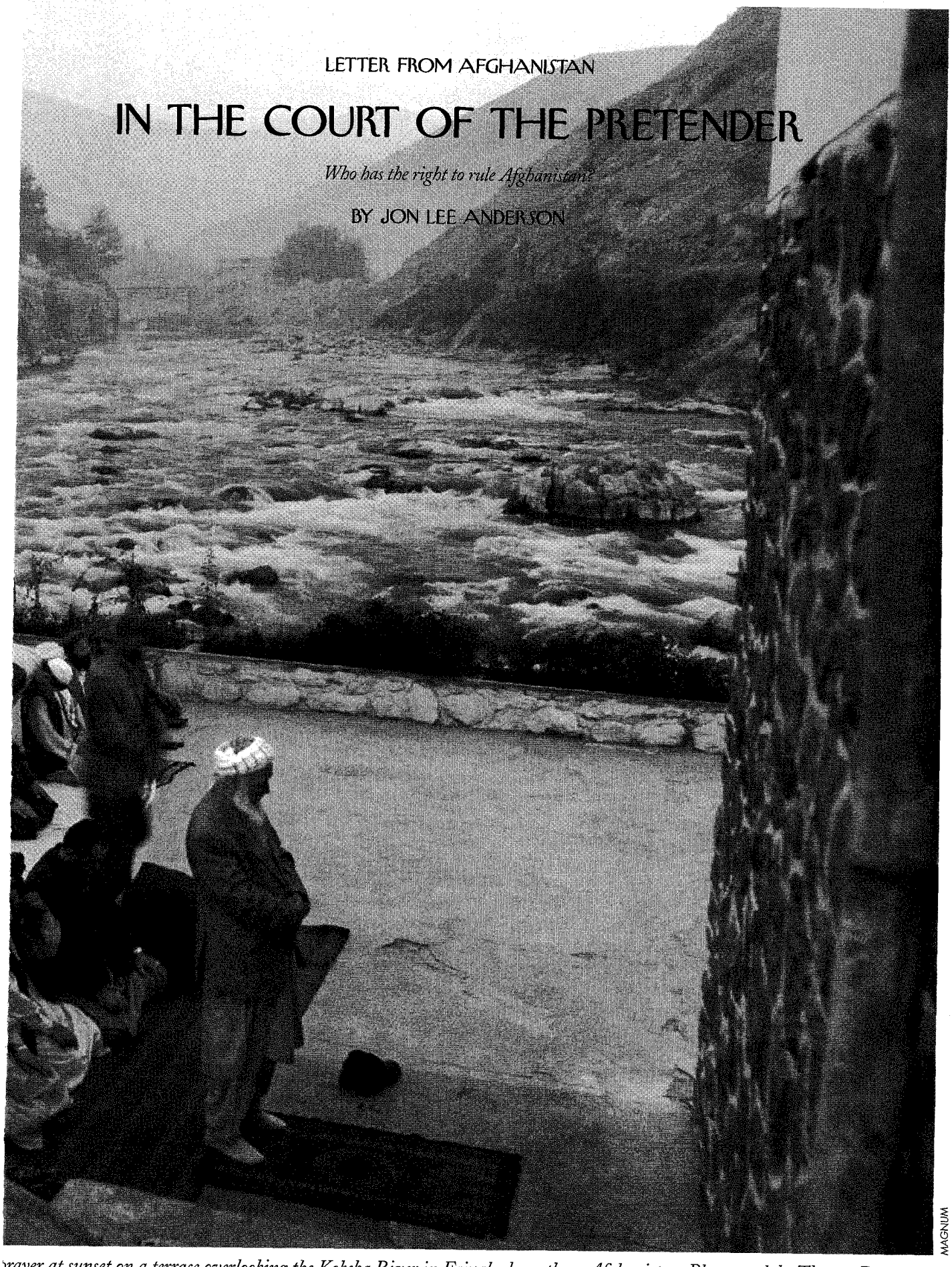
LETTER FROM AFGHANISTAN

IN THE COURT OF THE PRETENDER

Who has the right to rule Afghanistan?

BY JON LEE ANDERSON



MAGNUM

Prayer at sunset on a terrace overlooking the Kokcha River in Faizabad, northern Afghanistan. Photograph by Thomas Dworzak.

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One afternoon in the crowded bazaar in Faizabad, a muddy town of about a hundred thousand people in the far northeastern corner of Afghanistan, I came upon a stall where weapons were being sold. A good submachine gun was available for the equivalent of four hundred and eighty dollars, and there was a derringer in a shoulder holster, and ammunition. I was trying to have a conversation with the arms merchant when a worn-looking man appeared at my side and began to help translate. He spoke, with some effort, a curiously literary English with an Irish-sounding accent, and as we walked among the stalls of the bazaar he explained that he had been a journalist in Kabul until the Taliban closed down all the media. "Now I am jobless," he said, "and a displaced person." I was attracting quite a lot of attention by that time, as *kafirs*, or unbelievers—white-skinned non-Afghans—usually do. Dozens of children and men were crowding around, gaping and chattering. A soldier in a green jacket, camouflage pants, and black boots walked alongside us, wielding a short leather crop with which he whacked people who came too close to me. "The mujahideen are no different from the Taliban," my new companion said under his breath. He was referring to the soldier when he said "mujahideen," which is the general term for the Muslim fighters who participated in the jihad against the Soviets in the nineteen-eighties, and who are now fighting the Taliban. This particular mujahideen wore the uniform of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the government that fled Kabul when the Taliban took over, in 1996. The members of the government-in-exile are now part of the Northern Alliance, the main anti-Taliban opposition. "The government is fundamentalist," the former journalist muttered. "The only difference is who is in power and who isn't. The problem is Islam, you know. It's like a drug." He told me that he would meet me the next day, that he had things he wanted to say, and he slipped into the crowd.

Faizabad is the capital of Badakhshan Province, which shares a mountainous border with Tajikistan on the north and Pakistan on the east. A panhandle of the province extends northeast for nearly two hundred miles, past the part of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan, and then on to the border with China. The Soviets seized Faizabad when they invaded Afghanistan in December, 1979. They simply rolled their tanks across the Tajikistan border and established a base at the airstrip outside of town. Perhaps six thousand troops were stationed there. The mujahideen took control after the Soviets left, ten years later, and I was told that they went on a looting and burning rampage. The ruins of several government complexes are still visible.

Traders' caravans have passed through Faizabad for centuries. Smugglers still hawk their wares in the bazaar, a serpentine track lined with stalls of cloth merchants, shoemakers, and tailors working at old-fashioned hand-operated Butterfly sewing machines. The pelts of wolves, foxes, mink, lynx, and even snow leopards hang next to hand-wrought adzes, pickaxes, hatchets, and oxen plows. Money changers in the bazaar know with precision the current rates for American dollars, afghanis, and Iranian and Saudi rials. I met an eighteen-year-old boy there one day who had just arrived in town after walking over the mountains from Pakistan for a week. He was on the way, he said, to Germany, where an older brother lives. The boy was being helped by a network of relatives who had underworld contacts in Central Asia and Russia. Such people pass through Faizabad all the time, using the same routes by which arms and ammunition come into Afghanistan and by which opium and heroin flow out of it.

Burhanuddin Rabbani, the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan—which still controls the country's seat in the U.N., even though it hasn't controlled much else for some time—was born in Faizabad, and when the Taliban drove him out of Kabul he and his mujahideen fighters fled north, to Mazar-e-Sharif and Taloqan, and finally to his home town. Faizabad seems like a medieval city, and Rabbani's place in it is similar to that of a theocratic vizier or khan. The streets—dirt lanes, actually—are full of refugees, pale children with running sores, beggars in rags, elderly Tajik and Uzbek men clad in long winter tunics, mujahideen with guns, and women concealed by burkhas. Cows, donkeys, and the occasional horse wander about. Many of the tradesmen have hooped wooden cages that contain partridges. They keep them for *kawk tangi* fights, an ancient sport that is played in the spring.

There is almost no modern urban infrastructure in Faizabad. Most vehicles belong to the government and the mujahideen or to foreign aid organizations, although there are a few traders' trucks with colorful wooden bulwarks. A tiny, Russian-built television station serves some five thousand TV sets, and a beat-up and out-of-date electrical generator produces a few hours of weak electricity every four days. An ancient windup-telephone system operates through a switchboard. Several men, working in a large shed, hand-set a biweekly government newspaper—one folded sheet printed in Farsi, with a circulation of five hundred. The printing machines, which are from India, East Germany, and Romania, are museum pieces from the age of steel and iron foundries. Water is produced by rudimentary waterwheels or hand-pumped from open wells and carried by men and boys with buckets hanging from poles resting on their shoulders. Rubbish is dumped pretty much everywhere, and, while some people have outhouse latrines, a great many people—men, at least—defecate out of doors. The stench in certain quarters of the city, particularly around ruined houses, vacant lots, and along stretches of the riverbank, is overwhelming.

President Rabbani's home is, by Faizabad standards, luxurious. It is a two-story, tin-roofed house set behind a high stone-and-concrete wall on a back alleyway up the hill from the bazaar, in the Old City. The house is painted a pale blue, and there are iron railings on the verandas. Mujahideen sentinels are stationed outside. When Rabbani leaves the house, he travels in a convoy of two black Toyota Land Cruisers surrounded by gunmen. I interviewed him one afternoon in a bungalow called the Star Hotel, a few minutes from his house, where senior Northern Alliance officials work and live and which also serves as a kind of reception house for Rabbani. It was built on stone ramparts overlooking the Kokcha River, and you get to it on foot over a narrow concrete causeway. In the late afternoon, men fish from the causeway, and boys play games of vol-

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leyball on a nearby sandbar. Two soldiers carefully frisk visitors to the building and then inspect all their belongings. Items such as cigarette lighters, knives, and battery-operated flashlights are politely confiscated. Extra security precautions have been taken since September 9th, when the Northern Alliance's charismatic Defense Minister, Ahmed Shah Massoud, was assassinated by two Arabs posing as television journalists. The assassins had interviewed Rabbani in Faizabad a few days before they travelled to Massoud's headquarters in the town of Khoja Bahauddin, about eighty miles to the west.

A room in the Star Hotel has been set up for Rabbani's appearances. The floor is covered with a red carpet and the ceiling is draped with a cheap flowery fabric. Velvety armchairs are lined up against the walls, and at one end of the room, next to a flag stand with the banner of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, a chair has been placed for the President. Just in front, a low table is decorated with little vases filled with plastic flowers. The windows look out to the roiling, boulder-filled waters of the Kokcha, and the sound of rushing water penetrates the room.

The interview was scheduled for three o'clock, but Rabbani was an hour and a half late, and two of his senior minions—smooth young English-speaking men who wore Western clothes and had what looked like blow-dried hairdos—kept me company. Another aide began glancing pointedly at his watch after we had been standing in the room for more than an hour. "He must be busy with the Queen," the man said sarcastically. I was a little surprised, and asked him what people in Faizabad thought of Rabbani. "Except for a few commanders and these people"—he nodded his head toward the two minions with the hairdos—"he is hated by everyone." The man kept his voice low and watched to make sure that the loyalists were out of earshot. "People are fed up with him," he said. He explained that there had been no love lost between Rabbani and Massoud, and that there was a power struggle going on between Massoud's followers and Rabbani's. Massoud's official successor, General Fahim, had not yet managed to assume full command, and the situation was particularly tense because of the machinations involving the United States and the attempt to construct a "post-Taliban" government. Even some of Rabbani's relatives didn't want him to be President again. "Things have changed dramatically," the aide said, since Massoud's death, "and no one knows what will happen tomorrow." He then moved discreetly away to stand on the opposite side of the room.

"I don't eat meat or fish, so I can't tell you much about the specials."

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A few moments later, Rabbani entered the hallway leading to the room, his two aides scurrying along in half crouches in front of him, holding their hands on their hearts. Rabbani is in his early sixties. He has pale skin, and his beard is white and immaculately trimmed. He was wearing a pair of smart black leather loafers, a beige *shalwar kameez*—the tunic and loose pants that most Afghan men wear—and a camel-colored woollen waistcoat under a black-and-white herringbone blazer. His turban was white with black stripes. As he came into the room, he greeted me with a brief, friendly nod, and said, in English, "Good afternoon." Then he sat in his armchair and awaited my questions. His responses consisted mostly of a litany of Taliban perfidies and a long soliloquy about his past good intentions, which had been sadly frustrated by the Taliban's seizure of power.

Rabbani said that the Taliban's radical and violent interpretation of Islam under the guise of Sharia law was in fact nothing but an extremist application of a tribal code. I asked him to explain for me the brand of Islam that he had tried to establish when he was President—from 1992, when the mujahideen ousted the Afghan government that the Soviets had installed, until 1996, when the Taliban came in. He was vague on details, and said, a little defensively, "As you know, while I was President, because of the constant infighting I was unable to enforce Islamic law in a way that could benefit and advance Afghan society." Rabbani talked about the things he had tried to do: he had signed an amnesty for his former Communist foes; allowed political parties and a diverse media to operate freely; he had promoted foreign investment; rebuilt the war-damaged University of Kabul; encouraged female participation in teaching and banking jobs. Many other projects were still in the planning stages. "Unhappily, the ongoing civil war has not allowed us to take the practical steps to implement these projects," he said.

I asked Rabbani why, in the part of Afghanistan under his control, women wore the burkha. "The burkha is not a part of the Islamic tradition," he said. "When I was on the religious law fac-

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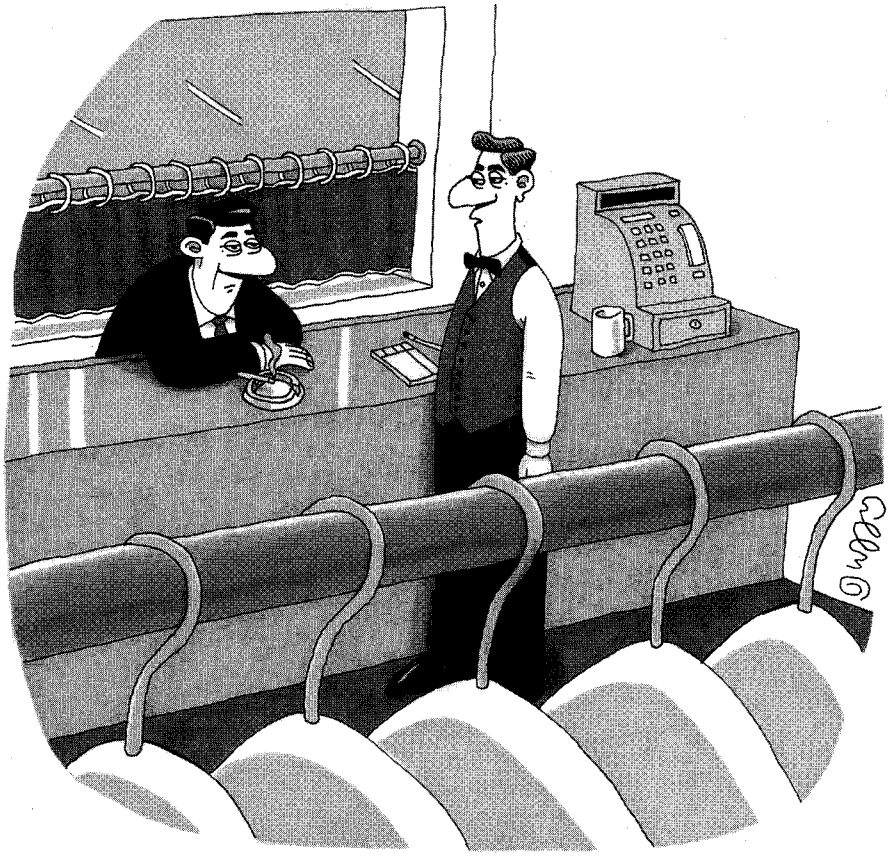

"Look, I'm sorry your wife doesn't understand you, but this is a dry cleaner's."

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ulty"—at the University of Kabul in the late sixties and early seventies—"I designed a new form of dress appropriate for female students that covered the head and shoulders, but left the face and hands exposed. Unfortunately, because of the coup, we were unable to take the matter further. Here the burkha is worn because of tradition. Because of the insecurity of the war situation, women are afraid not to wear it, but afterward they will be free not to use the burkha if they wish."

After about forty-five minutes of this sort of thing, Rabbani took his leave. The next day, I met with the man who had spoken about a rift between Massoud and Rabbani. "Massoud's people now suspect Rabbani and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf"—a mujahideen commander stationed in the Panjshir Valley—"of being behind the assassination," he said. Sayyaf has a bad reputation because he is viewed as having had too many close relationships with Arabs, and the Arab assassins had been with him for a month before going to Faizabad to interview Rabbani. My informant, who told me that his name is Walid (a pseudonym, as are several other names here), said that the assassins carried a letter to Massoud from Rabbani, and that this is what got them the audience with Massoud, during which they set off bombs hidden around one man's waist and in their camera. Faizabad is full of conspiracy theories and skeptical glosses on events, and Walid was not the only person who told me a version of the story of Rabbani's alleged complicity in Massoud's murder. Rabbani, on the other hand, told me that the assassins had wanted to kill him and Sayyaf as well as Massoud, and had tried to get all three of them together for a photograph.

Idris, the former journalist who said that Islam is like a drug, came to the government guesthouse where I was staying the day after we met in the bazaar. He suggested that we walk down by the river, and when we were out of earshot of the official minders he said that we could sit next to the ruined concrete bridge, and that if anyone asked what we were discussing we would say it was the history of the bridge. So we sat on a pile of broken masonry and Idris talked about his despair. He didn't care if he got into trouble for speaking to me. "I am tired of this life," he said, "and I am willing to be sacrificed. I am against fundamentalism of all kinds. I am against Islam, and when the Soviets were in Afghanistan I was also against Communism, which I think is a kind of fundamentalism." I asked him about President Rabbani. "Rabbani is a fundamentalist just like the Taliban," he said, and then he began to whisper. "Rabbani is secretly trying to make a deal with the Taliban, except for the Arabs who are in Afghanistan." He meant excluding Osama bin Laden's people. I asked Idris how he knew this, and he said that someone who worked closely with Rabbani had told him that overtures had taken place. Idris explained that Rabbani hoped to return to power as the head of a "moderate" fundamentalist regime made up of his allies and "acceptable" Taliban figures.

This, again, was a version of a story I heard from others, some of whom have more authoritative credentials than Idris does. In the public discussions about creating a coalition of factions that would form a government if or when the Taliban are crushed, Rabbani has guardedly supported the involvement of King Zahir Shah, whom the Americans and the Pakistanis are encouraging to convene a Loya Jirga, a grand national council that would choose a leader. But Walid said it is well known that Rabbani would never be elected by the Loya Jirga, and that he is secretly forming alliances to counter the King's coalition. The King is an ethnic Pashtun—that is, a member of a group from which, historically, Afghanistan's rulers have been drawn. The Taliban and most people who live in the southern part of Afghanistan are also Pashtuns. The mujahideen who formed a government in Kabul in 1992 and now make up the Northern Alliance are mostly ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks, like Rabbani.

A few days after our interview, President Rabbani went to Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, to meet with the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, who

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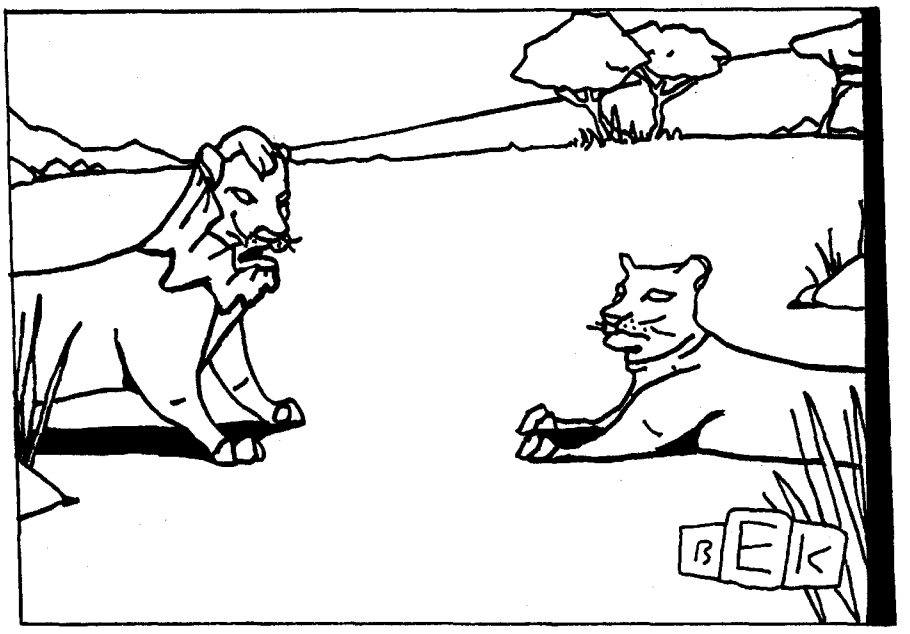
was on his way home from Shanghai, where he had met with President Bush. Walid told me later that Putin had assured Rabbani that he was the most acceptable candidate for the Presidency and had encouraged him not to support the King. "Of course, Rabbani does not need convincing about this," Walid said. According to Walid, Putin has been playing a double game with the Americans, as has Rabbani. But the meeting in Dushanbe clarified Putin's opposition to Taliban participation in a coalition government, and presumably Rabbani's gestures to the Taliban have ceased. Russia stepped up its military support for the Northern Alliance, and the first major shipment of new war matériel had just been handed over. "Russia provided the United Front"—the official name of the Northern Alliance—"with forty-five million dollars' worth of different weapons. Eight tanks, a remarkable amount of ammunition, and heavy and light weapons crossed the Tajik border into Afghanistan," Walid said. No helicopters were included in this package, he said, although Rabbani has been promised a further seventy-five million dollars' worth of hardware, including more tanks, helicopters, and new anti-aircraft guns. The present understanding with Russia seems to be that Rabbani would lead a post-Taliban government that would include Afghan technocrats now living abroad—these presumably picked by the Americans, and perhaps including some of Zahir Shah's people. "Rabbani is very pleased," Walid said.

During our chat by the river, Idris explained why he distrusted Rabbani. "When Rabbani was President," he said, "we had to wear beards, to pray all the time. Now he is weak, and so he is trying to put on a good face to the world, but if he becomes strong again he will do the same. He is a fundamentalist!" Idris is thirty-eight, although, like most Afghan men, he looks much older. He grew up in a rural district not far from Faizabad and studied journalism in Kabul in the nineteen-eighties. After he graduated, he served for three years in the military, during the government of Muhammad Najibullah, the Afghan Communist whom the Soviets made President in the late eighties, and who remained in power until he was ousted by the mujahideen, in 1992. Idris wrote for Army publications, and afterward worked for a newspaper that he describes as impartial. When Kabul fell to the mujahideen, however, he fled to Pakistan, fearing that he might be killed. He returned to Afghanistan two years ago. He has four children, ranging in age from three to thirteen. "How did you manage to have all those children if you were out of the country?" I asked him. He laughed, and explained that he had returned to Afghanistan several times, clandestinely, by walking over the border at Chitral—a timeworn smugglers' route—and sneaking back home. He would enter his village at night, he said, and not leave the house until it was time to go back to Pakistan. He came home to stay because after his last visit his wife had been beaten and interrogated by the local mujahideen commander. His family still lives in the village, and since he cannot get work he is finding it hard to spend time with them. He says they nearly died of hunger eight months ago. He came to Faizabad to see if he could work as a translator for a Western journalist.

When I suggested to Idris that it must have been very hard for his wife all those years that he was away, he assured me that he had her total support, and that, like him, she is educated, and is in complete agreement with his views. He said that they have been teaching their children not to believe in Islam, although they understand that they must pay lip service to religion in school. He said that he had thought about naming his son after Salman Rushdie. "I wanted to name him Salman, but some of my friends convinced me that this was not a good idea."

While he was in Pakistan, Idris survived by translating books from Urdu, which he learned while he was there, along with English. I ended up spending several days in Faizabad with him, and he always carried a Farsi-English dictionary and would ask me to explain the difference between similar terms—between "fornication" and "adultery," for instance. Idris said that Islam is like "a cave"—he pulled out the Farsi-English dictionary to find the word he wanted—which is "full of bacteria." I remarked that life must be extremely hard for him, being alone in a land such as this. "Well, you know, there are a lot of people in Afghanistan who hate Islam, but they cannot show their faces," he said. He described himself as a humanist, and said he had read a lot: "Goethe, Jean-Paul Sartre, Victor Hugo, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Albert Camus." Also American writers like Faulkner and Steinbeck, he added. "It helped me open my eyes and look at the sky of the world." He had written a book about



"Oh, thanks—I figured that as long as I was having the thorn taken out of my paw I might as well have a body scrub and get my mane redone."

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Islam, unpublished, of course. It was critical of the Koran, and of the Prophet Muhammad, whom he described as an illiterate shepherd. The book was titled, he said, translating roughly from the Farsi, "The Crazy Dogs of Certain Centuries."

Idris is an iconoclast, and, for Afghanistan, an extraordinary man—brave to the point of foolhardiness. In this context, in fact, he could be regarded as half mad, and perhaps he is. He is well read, and an atheist, he understands that life can be different, and he is desperately clinging to his beliefs in a poverty-stricken charnel house that is ruled by illiterate gunmen, brutish warlords, and superstitious mullahs.

There is a large graffito on a wall along the main road into Faizabad that says, in English, "Production Sale and Use of Opium Is Strongly Forbidden by Islam." A similar declamation is painted on a ruined building at the airport. One can't help getting the impression that these are Potemkin-style diktats designed to please workers for United Nations agencies and Western aid organizations who go in and out of town. Opium is the most important crop in Afghanistan, not least for the mujahideen, who got into the business in the eighties, during the jihad against the Soviets. Last year, according to the C.I.A., Afghanistan produced seventy per cent of the world's opium. Much of it is said to go through Faizabad. After I had been in town for a few days, I met a man who works for one of the foreign aid organizations and who explained to me how some of the trafficking works. "A lot of opium is grown in Badakhshan Province," he said. "And some is purchased from local people on both sides of the front lines"—where the Taliban and the Northern Alliance are fighting. "It's mostly sent out in raw form and then refined in Tajikistan and sent to the West through Moscow." He said that last year, when he was helping distribute wheat to refugees near the front line on the Kokcha River, near the border with Tajikistan, he had seen donkeys ferrying opium between the Taliban and Northern Alliance sides. The Northern Alliance commanders and the Taliban arranged the exchanges by radio, he said. "Some of them had friendly contacts, even though they were fighting one another." Helicopters from Tajikistan picked up the opium at dropoff points near the border formed by the Amu Dar'ya River. The aid worker said that last year there was an official ban on opium trafficking, but that "no real practical steps have been taken." He smiled. The ban was a "nine-day wonder," good for public relations.

"The problem with you is that you try to be a lot nicer than you really are."

I also discussed the opium situation with Muhammad Nazir Shafiee, President Rabbani's foreign-relations adviser and a member of the President's Commission for the Fight Against Drugs and Narcotics. Nazir is twenty-seven years old. He was one of the aides who had held his hand over his heart as he escorted Rabbani into the room at the Star Hotel for our interview. He explained that Rabbani's government had been confiscating drugs, arresting traffickers, and destroying opium fields. But, he added, the Islamic State of Afghanistan also had to deal with drought, war, and the influx of displaced people from both plagues. The U.N. and other international aid organizations had not helped them much with crop-substitution programs for the affected farmers. Nazir blamed the opium trafficking and the heroin trade on ethnic Pashtuns, and on the Taliban. He was especially critical of Pakistan. "In Faizabad, there has only been one crime in the past twelve months—a theft from one shop. The people here are not familiar with international criminal activity—this comes from Pakistan. The Pakistanis, you know, will sell their own mothers for four thousand rupees."

Nazir also complained that whenever U.N. officials or foreign diplomats came to northern Afghanistan they were critical because women wore burkhas. "They don't have to wear burkhas," he said. "Women are free to do what they want here." He attributed the burkha-

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wearing phenomenon to social pressures. He denied claims that Rabbani first imposed the burkha when he became President. "At the beginning of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, we were weak and had to make compromises and accept the participation of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a fundamentalist. He had Pakistan behind him, and he was raining rockets on Kabul. He made women wear burkhas, but it was not the policy of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The West thinks we are fundamentalists, and that because we started the Islamic revolution we are dangerous. But we are reasonable Muslims, I tell you!"

Nazir does not support the return of King Zahir Shah. "How can we accept this man who has spent the last twenty-eight years living a comfortable life in Rome? Did he come once to see the refugees in Pakistan during all the years of the jihad, even just to say hello? No, not once. Not for one day, not even one hour. He never came. And, before that, for forty years he was king of this country. He spent his time having a very good life, hunting, drinking, and playing with women. Did he make a road? Did he leave a factory that could make one of these?"—Nazir held up a ballpoint pen. "No! He left nothing." If there was any man qualified to run Afghanistan after the Taliban were thrown out, he said, it was Rabbani. And he hoped to go to Kabul and have a post—*inshallah*, God willing—in the future government with him.

Nazir explained that he owed his position and his rising influence in part to his late father, a religious scholar who had been chief justice for Rabbani's Jamiat-i Islami Party and an old friend. His father was also Rabbani's law adviser during his Presidency. Nazir is from an Afghan family of, as he put it, high standing. "We own twenty-four thousand acres of land," he said. "I have stamped documents from all the kings of Afghanistan over four centuries which says we are the owners." Under the Soviet-backed Communist regime, he said, the family's land was confiscated and split into many six-acre plots that were given to farmers. "We have recouped most of it." Four thousand people lived on the land as sharecroppers. The people in his district still treat him with deference and address him by the hereditary feudal title "Khan," but he doesn't like it. "I tell them not to, because I am a modern man, and I want to make my way with my own shoulders." If democracy returned to Afghanistan, he said, he hoped to go into politics himself, maybe by running for parliament. He would have a chance of winning, because of his family's influence. "We are not only economically powerful, you see; we have also been a very religious family, for centuries." So how high was he aiming? "First, parliament, and then who knows? I will see how far I can go."

Zarmeena, an Afghan woman of about thirty, works for a foreign aid organization that has an office in the so-called New City, a spacious, dusty suburb of Faizabad where most of the N.G.O.s have their compounds—although there are virtually no foreign workers left there. They fled the country after Massoud was killed and the World Trade Center was attacked. Zarmeena wears a burkha when she is in public, but inside her office she simply wears a scarf over her hair. She lived in Kabul through the years of Communist government and was there in 1992, when Najibullah fell and the mujahideen seized power. "The changes from Najib to Rabbani weren't so great," Zarmeena said, "except that the fighting went on, and every part of Kabul was controlled by a different mujahideen faction, and it was very difficult to move from one part of the city to the other. I lived in the area controlled by Rabbani and Massoud's men. When the Taliban came, I used to wear a big shawl with only my eyes showing. Then I heard that some women were being beaten in the city center for wearing the same kind of shawl, and so I put on the burkha. It is difficult to wear, especially for more than two or three hours; it is very hot inside, it is hard to walk, and you get a headache, because the top of it is so tight on your head."

Zarmeena was a medical student until that became no longer possible for women. "So then I got married," she said, with a laugh, "because I had nothing else to do, and a year after the Taliban took power we came here. When we arrived, it was more or less the same as Kabul. Women could be doctors and teachers, for instance, although they were not allowed to work with the Western N.G.O.s. It was not looked well upon—that a woman would be working in an office together with men." Zarmeena was one of the first women to overcome that ban. As for the burkha, she believes that it is officially required in Northern Alliance territory. "I think it is a law." I told her that President Rabbani had said that Afghan women were free to go without it if they chose. Zarmeena smiled and raised her eyebrows. "I'd like to see him say that to a group of Afghan women," she said. Zarmeena was teaching English to a group of girls, and she had not yet got into trouble for that, although she knew people who had. "The way it works here, if I am very active—if I do things they don't like, like speaking out or participating in certain meetings—the mullahs will make remarks about me in the Friday prayers. The government supports the mullahs in this. It is a form of social control. And this is why women here do not take off the burkha." I asked her if she would go out without one. "It takes great courage to be the first," she said. "It would be very hard."

Salahuddin Rabbani, the President's eldest son, is married to a woman who does not wear a burkha, although he said he hoped that I would not mention this. Salahuddin's wife and two children live in London, as did he until September 15th, when he returned to Afghanistan to be with his father. Salahuddin is thirty years old and is the third of the President's ten children. He is a full-faced young man of medium build and height, darker-skinned than his father, with a faint goatee and dark hair parted in the middle. He wears frameless glasses, and has a modest-seeming, intelligent demeanor.

Salahuddin studied at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran from 1989 to 1995, and received a degree in marketing. He went to Pakistan, married an Afghan girl from a Pashtun family living in exile there, and moved to Dubai, where he started an import-export business, which he didn't particularly enjoy. He and his family moved to London. He earned a degree in business management and

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was going to continue his studies, but now he thinks he should stay in Afghanistan. "I see my future here, as an Afghan trying to do something for his country," he said to me, adding, with a chuckle, "Now I just have to convince my wife."

Salahuddin came back, he said, because "the death of Massoud placed a huge burden on my father." He confirmed that Massoud had died when the bombs went off, but that his death was kept secret for almost a week because of the demoralizing effect it would have on the Northern Alliance fighters. The Taliban immediately launched an offensive. "They intended to take northern Afghanistan," he said, "and then Samarqand and Bukhara"—in Uzbekistan—and also advance into Tajikistan. "And, you know, they might have succeeded, because the Central Asian states are very weak. If the Russian border guards weren't stationed there, they might have fallen already."

Salahuddin describes his father as a moderate political figure. He recalled that in the nineteen-eighties, during the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan, he went to Washington at the invitation of President Reagan: "He went at the height of anti-American feeling in the Muslim world, and was opposed by many Arab states who had been backing the mujahideen, and he even laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier." Afterward, Salahuddin said, "these wealthy Arabs stopped supporting us, and they began calling my father 'the American.'"

I said to Salahuddin that it seemed clear to me that his father, for all his careful language on the matter, was against the return of King Zahir Shah, and he agreed. "This government is the legitimate government and is made up of people who fought for the country for many years. If Zahir Shah comes back, which forces will pave the way for him and protect him—the U.N.?" He objected to the criticism of the Northern Alliance as a group of ethnic minorities. "There is no majority people in Afghanistan," he said. The notion that Afghanistan had to be led by an ethnic Pashtun was a Pakistani concoction.

Salahuddin made much of what he perceived as the dilemma the Pakistanis were now in because of their interference in Afghanistan's affairs. "With the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, the Pakistanis put all of their eggs in one basket. Now they are looking for another force to represent their interests. In a sense, before the missile strikes, by being the one country trying to legitimatize the Taliban in the eyes of the international community, they were trying to get a U.N. seat for bin Laden." Salahuddin laughed. "That would have been a real first. The first U.N. representation for an international terrorist."

Salahuddin, like Nazir, said that his father had not been responsible for the introduction of the burkha and other Islamic social restrictions. "My wife is a dental hygienist," he said, "and currently a domestic engineer"—this was said lightheartedly, meaning she was raising their kids—"but if she wants to go to work I don't mind. My father did not impose the burkha. The burkha is an Afghan custom. No one is telling women they must wear it." He wouldn't let himself get drawn into a discussion of whether or not it would be appropriate for his wife to test this view of the situation if she came to Afghanistan, but when we said goodbye, amid the attendants and bodyguards, Salahuddin turned to me and said, "I hope when we next meet it will be in Kabul"—he smiled—"and that there you will see many women who are dressed only in scarves and loose clothing, not in burkhas."

I met a man in Faizabad, Dr. Rostum, who is what he described as a member of Afghanistan's educated urban intelligentsia. He is more than a decade older than Salahuddin, and his experiences during the years that the Rabbani government was in power—years that Salahuddin was out of the country—did not conform with Salahuddin's recollections. Dr. Rostum came to Faizabad last year, when his home town fell to the Taliban. It was the fifth time in the last six years that he had moved his family because of the advancing war. He came to see me at the guesthouse one afternoon just before sunset, and we went to the far end of the garden to talk. We sat at one of the stone tables overlooking the Kokcha, under a big walnut tree.

Dr. Rostum was a medical student in Kabul and had graduated during the Communist regime in the mid-eighties. He has a beard and wears a *shalwar kameez*, but he said that he used to be clean-shaven and wear Western clothes. Then, in the early nineties, when Rabbani took power, men were required to have beards and pray five times a day and women were separated from men on public buses. "I am a Muslim," he said, "and sometimes I

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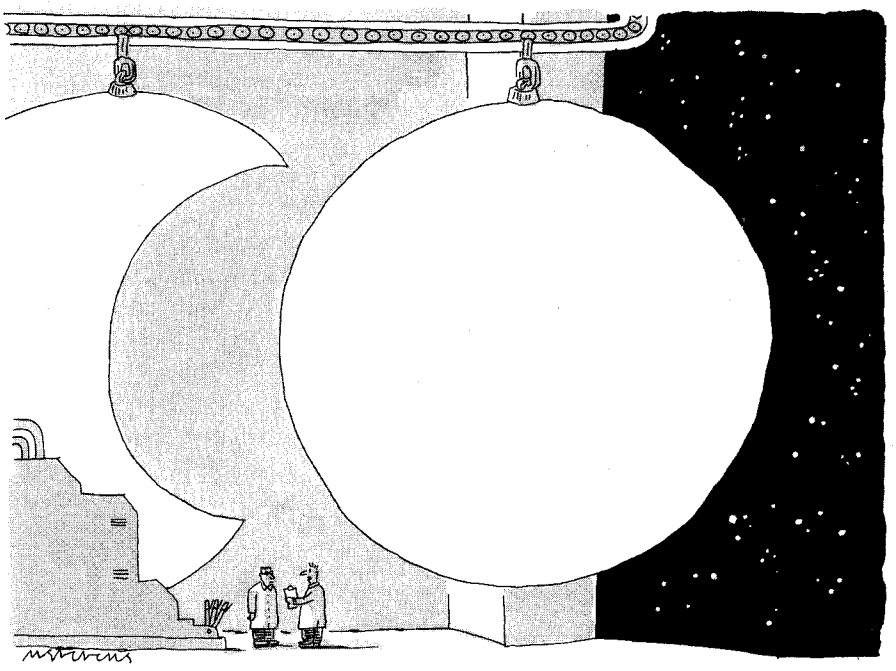
even go to the mosque to pray—but why should I be forced to go five times a day?" The transformation of Afghanistan began when the mujahideen were in Kabul, he said. He described a mujahideen commander ordering the destruction of the electrical generator in the town where he lived in northern Afghanistan. It was an act of vengeance against the Communists. "The commander said, 'The Communists say that history can never be turned back. But I will turn it back.' And he destroyed the generator." Dr. Rostum clasped his hands together tightly when he told me this story, recalling what it meant for his country.

"In the seventies," Dr. Rostum said, "life for me was going to school and being well dressed and thinking about the future. A doctor was a well-regarded person then, with a secure job in a hospital. Every morning, he shaved, and would dress in pants and a shirt and then he would drive to work in his own vehicle, or go by government transport. There was a government, and the government paid him a salary. He didn't have to work in other jobs, like being a baker, a salesman, or a clerk. He only had to be a doctor. But now in Faizabad there are doctors and science teachers who are making bricks, working as clerks, selling food in the bazaar. I personally hoped that when the mujahideen came to power, since they had been backed by foreign countries, they would bring modernity with them. But it was exactly the opposite of what I hoped." And then, when the Taliban came, things got even worse.

"When we were younger, under Zahir Shah"—in the sixties—"and later under Daud"—who overthrew the King in 1973—"there were cinemas and theatres in Kabul and Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad, and for ladies there was no pressure to wear burkhas. In those days, maybe one to two per cent of the girls wore burkhas—they were from very conservative religious families. And they were not like the burkhas of today, which have come from Iran or Pakistan; they were more like long veils. My father was a small trader who made trips to Kabul. My brothers and I begged him to bring us a radio, and, when he did, our house was like a wedding party for three months. All of our neighbors would come over to hear the news and listen to music." Dr. Rostum smiled as he recalled that the radio had played every morning from six to eight, then at lunchtime from twelve to one, and in the evenings from six to nine. "When Daud came to power in Afghanistan, the education was great, it was the golden time for education. And at the end of his time he brought us a TV station. It was a very new thing for us, to see people announcing the news, watching films, and singing songs. And even after the Soviet invasion, in the cities that were controlled by the government, things continued mostly as usual. The educational system continued and received the support of the government. There were lots of books, as well, even if these came mostly from the Soviet bloc. The way things are today, it is as if Afghanistan had stepped back a hundred years in time."

I asked Dr. Rostum if he was depressed. "Yes," he said. "Very depressed. I want to live, to have a comfortable life. What is that? To have electricity, good sanitation, and to have time for oneself. For instance, now I have to spend a lot of my time—when I am not working—just in finding and preparing food for the family. There is no time for entertainment, or sports, or travel. It would be nice to have a TV satellite dish . . . or any of the things that are necessary for the enjoyment of modern life. The second reason I am depressed is that there is no possibility of a future for my children. My wife and I tutor them, but they still have to go to school for their accreditation. And the schools are very bad. My son, for instance, is in the eighth grade, and out of eleven subjects he has eight that have to do with religion or the Arabic language. It's very difficult for him—he is only twelve years old. All this started with the mujahideen.

"What I dream about for the future for Afghanistan, is to have a stable government, to have electricity and paved roads, and good relations with our neighbors," Dr. Rostum said. "I hope that when the policymakers form their coalition they will not forget the educated people, the doctors and teachers and engineers who have been in Afghanistan during all these years of fighting. I say this because if Zahir Shah and his people come here from Europe to form a government and bring their aristocrats and their technocrats—they are of course welcome to include such qualified people—they should not forget those of us who were not with the Taliban or with the mujahideen. We have a right to have a voice in the future of our country." ♦



"Yes, I'm sure. It says here the full moon isn't until the twenty-third."

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PROFILES

THE MODERNIST

Kirk Varnedoe, the Museum of Modern Art, and the tradition of the new.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

Ten years ago, you kept hearing that modern art was over. Postmodernism had arrived, and the critical theorists who controlled aesthetic discourse in academic circles wrote dense tracts to show how postmodern art, with its ironies and its multicultural references and borrowings, differed in some essential way from what we had been dealing with for the past hundred years. It now appears that the theorists were wrong. The sun has not set on modern art, after all; the modernist enterprise, in fact, seems more entrenched and more global than ever, its confidence level symbolized by the six-hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar expansion and rebuilding program now in progress at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. By the time this hugely ambitious undertaking is completed, in 2004 or 2005, the whole notion of postmodernism may very well be obsolete.

As the mother church of modern art—one of the first museums ever to devote itself exclusively to work dating from about 1880 to the present—MOMA, of course, has a sizable stake in keeping the faith alive. Faith is the operating principle here, instilled by Alfred H. Barr, the founding director, whose compelling belief in the moral, intellectual, and social validity of modern art is still widely shared by members of the present-day staff, and even by the wealthy and socially prominent trustees who help pay the bills, and who sometimes think they run the place. The trustees tried to get rid of Barr in 1943. They took away his directorship, but he stayed on at the museum, writing his book on Picasso, and the curators kept coming to him for advice. Four years later, the trustees gave in and named him Director of Museum Collections. The title, which meant little, enabled him to reclaim de-facto control over the Department of Painting and Sculpture, the museum's biggest and richest department and, from Barr's day to this, the pontifical seat of modern art. Although Barr had no real executive power, his intellectual authority was so great that he was able to name his own successor. William S. Rubin, who in 1967 became the next head of painting and sculpture at MOMA, was a man whose high-powered intellect and bulldozer personality differed in nearly every particular from Barr's, but he proved fully equipped to steer the course that Barr had charted. Rubin, in turn, named his successor: a young art historian and university professor named Kirk Varnedoe, who took over the department in 1988, and who, like Rubin and Barr, has frequently been misidentified as the director of the museum.

After a somewhat rocky start—his first major exhibition as the departmental director, a 1990 survey of the relationship between modern art and popular culture called "High and Low," was resoundingly panned—Varnedoe soon proved his mettle in the line of succession. His subsequent exhibitions, the most notable being well-organized and illuminating retrospectives of the contemporary masters Cy Twombly and Jasper Johns and a dazzling career reassessment of Jackson Pollock, were widely admired. He has enhanced the collection with a number of significant and in some cases daring acquisitions, ranging from van Gogh's moving portrait of the postman Joseph Roulin to James Rosenquist's colossal Pop masterwork "F-111" and Andy Warhol's iconic group of thirty-two paintings of thirty-two Campbell's soup cans. Handsome, dynamic, fiercely intelligent, and dauntingly articulate, Varnedoe, who was forty-two when he got the job, has been an effective spokesman for his department and for modern art in general. The faith was with him, and the power, too. It is pretty clear, in fact, that one of the reasons "High and Low" took such a pounding was that Varnedoe had made himself a public target of those critical theorists who accuse the museum of being élitist, or sexist, or racist, or consumerist—all the cardinal sins decreed by the new, post-structuralist priesthood, which views much modern art as a veiled apology for the existing political and social power structure.

Varnedoe kept up with the latest theories, but he didn't buy them, any more than he had bought the earlier, formalist theories espoused by the critic Clement Greenberg and his numerous acolytes. "The evangelical, positivist accounts of modern art's development, and the cynical and jaded determinist or Marxist accounts—I never felt any of them did justice to the richness and variety of what had been achieved," he told me last spring. "I really believe in hard looking at real things—individual pictures and sculptures. Not just historical situations but the physical reality of objects. I felt that the theoreticians had lost some of the great joy of art, which was its sensual immediacy and a complex kind of intelligence that is not literary or verbal intelligence. The notion that ultimately it's the theory which is the viable and worthy part of art history—this seems to me an entirely rank prejudice." Or, as he put it on another occasion, "It's just hooey."

Like most of his colleagues at MOMA, Varnedoe sees so-called postmodernism as a phase in the continuing tradition of modern art. "My thought exercise is this," he said one morning, as we sat in his large, productively cluttered office on the museum's fifth floor, where the window overlooked a deep construction pit that used to be the sculpture garden. "Take art from 1800 to 1850, O.K.? We see the difference between David and Courbet, no problem. But then take art from 1870 to 1920—not the same fifty years. The difference between David and Courbet collapses to nothing when you look at the difference between a Monet of 1870 and what's going on by 1920. Something truly drastic has changed, and it's changed across the board. Not just in the absence of perspective and the introduction of found objects but in the na-

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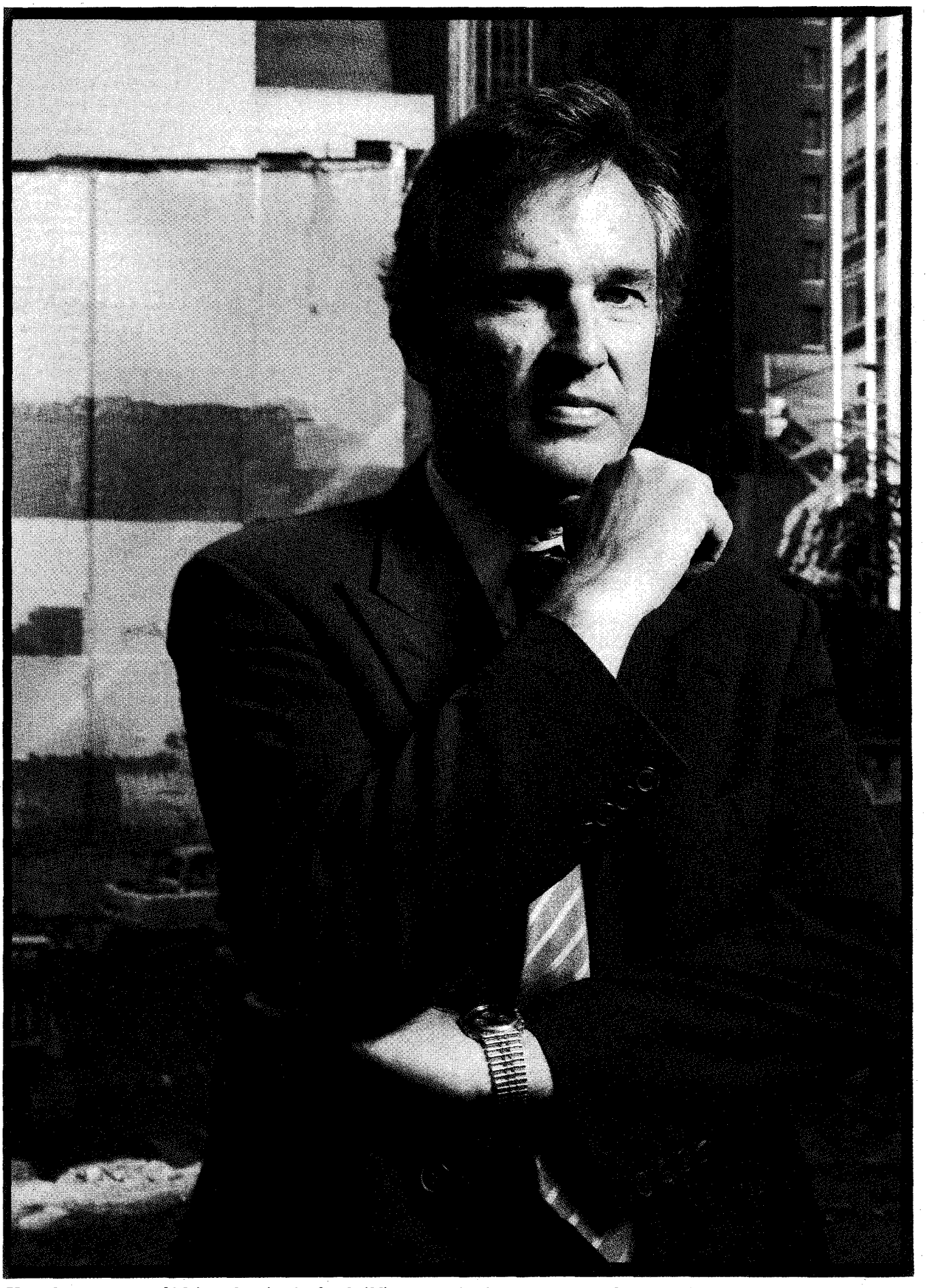

Varnedoe at MOMA, *which is undergoing its first building expansion in twenty years. Photograph by Michael O'Neill.*

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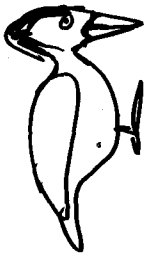
ture of the relationship of art to the public, the dealer structure, the expectations of what the visual arts are and what their role in society is. I think you have to look back to 1440 to 1490 for that level of profound change in the purposes and structures of art."

One of the things that make Varnedoe so effective on the lecture platform is that his fluency never seems rehearsed; his thoughts come across with the headlong intensity and conviction of something voiced for the first time. This is pretty much the way he usually talks, whether he's addressing an audience or speaking to one person in his office. "I do agree that under the general rubric of postmodernism some important shifts in emphasis and some important changes in the priority of certain questions occurred," he went on to say that morning in his office. "But I believe these took place within the modernist movement. Take the recent shift from the Cézanne-Picasso lineage to the Duchamp lineage, for example. The ascendancy of the Duchampian strain has been enormous and extraordinarily powerful, but that was always a strain in modern art. It was there from the beginning. You would have said, prior to Jasper Johns, that those two sides couldn't be reconciled, but Jasper's art works with both of them. Each of his 'Flag' paintings is a Duchampian gesture painted like a Cézanne. I believe that modern art was the result of an extremely complex set of DNAs that are still permuting, and giving off their arguments, but that so far there has not been a watershed anything like as divisive or as sharp as the watershed that occurred back then."

Like the art it shows, the museum itself has been going through changes in recent years. Glenn Lowry, the current director, is a much more activist chief executive than Richard Oldenburg, his predecessor, who ran the place from 1972 to 1995. Oldenburg kept a fairly low profile in his dealings with the curatorial end of things, allowing the department chiefs to perpetuate what had long been described as a system of feudal fiefdoms within the museum. Lowry, an Islamic-art scholar who, in his previous directorial role, had steered the Art Gallery of Ontario through a serious financial crisis, brought considerable skill and energy to bear on breaking down the barriers between MOMA's departments and getting the curators to be more collegial. He also worked to break down the old-boy network, placing more women in top jobs and encouraging the many female members of the staff to believe that their voices were as audible as those of their male colleagues. Whether a young director (Lowry was forty-one when he took over) could have pulled off these and other changes a few years earlier is open to question. As it happened, most of the entrenched Old Guard department heads had retired or died not long before he arrived, and their replacements, by and large, have gone along with his reforms. According to Terence Riley, the chief curator of the Department of Architecture and Design, Lowry has removed a lot of the administrative burdens from the curatorial departments, freeing the curators to "do what we need to do."

Although Lowry and Varnedoe are not close friends, they respect each other, and they agree on many of the major issues facing the new, expanded museum, which has been designed by the Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi. The most persistent criticism of MOMA (and of Bill Rubin) over the past twenty years—that the museum paid too little attention to contemporary art—is being met head on. Two and a half years ago, Lowry, acting largely on his own initiative, engineered a merger between MOMA and P.S. 1, the former public school in Long Island City that Alanna Heiss, its founding director, had turned into a preëminent showcase for cutting-edge art. The two institutions continue to function independently, but MOMA helps with fund-raising and other operations, and gets credit for its benevolent support. At the new MOMA, moreover, Taniguchi's design calls for the entire first floor to be devoted to contemporary work. The older part of the collection, displayed on the fourth and fifth floors, will have about the same amount of space it has now, but in surroundings that do away with the didactic, one-way march through the history of the modern movement which was laid down by Bill Rubin. Visitors will be able to pick their own path through the gardens of modernism, sticking to the main, or "fixed," galleries, whose hangings are relatively permanent, or venturing into "variable" side galleries in which temporary installations provide different perspectives and allow the curators to exhibit secondary or related works. The goal of the two-tier layout is to show more of the collection without endlessly enlarging the museum.



"At one point, when we talked about all the space we needed," Varnedoe told me, "we realized we were going to become as big as the Philadelphia Museum, but that's not what this place is. We're not an encyclopedic museum. It's meant to be a relatively intimate experience." Barr's original concept had been to show modern art in galleries that combined the intimacy of a bourgeois apartment with the open space and abundant light of an artist's studio. The museum's last major expansion, carried out in the early nineteen-eighties, had simply enlarged on this model by adding more galleries, but the result was "claustrophobic and monotonous," as Varnedoe put it. "One of the things that made the new painting and sculpture galleries so tiresome was that, once you went in, you either had to go all the way through to the end or come back out. There was no way to shortcut, to go directly to your favorite things. This time around, we all agreed that you can't get bigger just by adding more beads on your existing string. You have to rethink the whole experience."

A lot of people have proprietary feelings about the Museum of Modern Art, however, and there are loyalists who choke on the idea of rethinking Alfred Barr. When Frank Stella, whose two MOMA retrospectives (in 1970 and 1987) established him as one of the museum's most favored postwar artists, was invited to lecture at the Frick Museum last year, he startled his hosts and his large audience by launching an all-out, over-the-top attack on Glenn Lowry and John Elderfield, MOMA's chief curator at large, whom he accused of insulting and betraying Barr and debasing the museum's matchless collection of painting and sculpture. Stella's specific target was

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"ModernStarts," the first in a series of three museum-wide exhibitions in which, prior to the gradual closing of the museum for renovation and expansion, the curators in all departments were encouraged to experiment with the collections in new ways. Varnedoe attended the Frick lecture, and confronted Stella afterward. He pointed out, inter alia, that Stella had weakened his case by using a digitally invented slide of the installation to make one of his points, and he tried to reassure the artist that "ModernStarts," whose over-all supervisor had been Elderfield, was by no means a preview of how MOMA would present its treasures in the new museum. Stella remained unreassured. "I don't believe they have the right to experiment with the great works of twentieth-century art," he said to me. "They're looking for an idea which is not like Alfred's, but that's like looking for an idea of how to get an airplane off the ground by denying the principles of aeronautics."

Other people outside the museum worry that MOMA may go the way of the new Tate Modern, in London, forgoing historical continuity in favor of jazzy "theme shows," and juxtaposing painting, sculpture, photography, prints, and decorative arts in mixed-media installations to tell "stories" whose import is more sociological than aesthetic. That, according to both Varnedoe and Lowry, is simply not going to happen. "This museum has absolutely no intention of abandoning its historical tradition," Varnedoe said. "There are only two museums in the world whose collections allow them to cover the whole field of modern art—MOMA and the Centre Pompidou—and MOMA should never abandon that responsibility."

All the same, the new MOMA will no doubt be a very different place from the one we have known, and a certain amount of separation anxiety is inevitable. For seventy-two years, the museum has been the great teacher of the modern idea. It has shaped the visual culture of our era, and it has done so by teaching a gospel that is no longer acceptable to much of what passes for advanced thinking today—the admittedly élitist gospel that Barr once defined as "the conscientious, continuous, resolute distinction of quality from mediocrity." In a time when the very notion of quality is considered repressive in some quarters, and the pressure of outside events can make aesthetic choices seem marginal, Barr's legacy will be tested in ways that no one has yet foreseen.

'He's gone from the most-wanted list to someone the authorities would like to talk to."

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Varnedoe can remember the first time he ever captured an audience. He was in his senior year at St. Andrew's School in Delaware (the boarding school where "Dead Poets Society" was filmed). The students in his dorm had gathered to discuss some communal issue, and one of them was acting like a wise-ass. "I sort of snapped at the guy," Varnedoe told me, "and suddenly the place went quiet. The wise-ass shut up. I had changed the room somehow, by talking, and I said to myself, 'Something has just happened.' "

A certain level of verbal agility was taken for granted in the Varnedoe family; Kirk grew up as the youngest of four contentious and highly articulate children in an upper-middle-class family in Savannah, Georgia. His two brothers and his sister had all been born within a year of each other, and Kirk, who came along six years after the youngest, in 1946, always felt as though he had had two adolescences—theirs, whose idols he shared vicariously (Elvis Presley), and his own (Bob Dylan). He was named after his mother's father, John Kirk Train, a well-known and much loved Savannah doctor. Lilla, Kirk's mother, had graduated from Smith College and gone on to get a master's degree in creative writing. She supported integration long before her friends did, and Kirk was closer to her than he was to his father, a self-made investment banker who once voted for George Wallace. The family household in Savannah struck Robert Rosenblum, the art historian, who went to a dinner party there in the nineteen-eighties, as "so antebellum you couldn't believe it, with black waiters in white gloves, and ham and biscuits, and a curved staircase." (His parents, though, accepted without hesitation Kirk's decision to marry a Jewish girl from California.) When Kirk went away to St. Andrew's, he was, by his own account, a spoiled, lazy, and seriously overweight adolescent. "For reasons that no one understood," his brother Sam told me, "he went out for football at prep school. There was a famous letter in which he said he ran so hard he puked. But, boy, he hung in there. He made himself into a football player. He graduated magna cum laude, and was valedictorian of his class. The headmaster said that when Kirk came to us he was five feet five and weighed a hundred and sixty-five, and now he's five-eleven and weighs a hundred and sixty-five."

Having turned his life around through

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sheer will power, he entered a long period of making all the right moves. He applied to only two colleges, Princeton and Williams, and was accepted by both. He chose Williams because it was small enough for someone who was not an athletic superstar to play varsity sports—"I may be small," he joked, "but I'm slow"—and because it had a studio-art program. Kirk had always been good at drawing, and he thought he might like to become an illustrator of some sort. What he could not have known then was that the Williams art-history department would shortly become famous as an incubator of American museum directors. Not since Paul Sachs taught his museum course at Harvard in the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties had so many professional careers in the arts been hatched in one place. Robert T. Buck (former director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art), Roger Mandle (head of the Rhode Island School of Design), James N. Wood (director of the Art Institute of Chicago), John Lane (director of the Dallas Museum of Art), Earl A. Powell III (director of the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C.), and Thomas Krens (director of the Guggenheim Museum) all graduated from Williams in the nineteen-sixties, and Glenn Lowry graduated in 1976. All of them will tell you that S. Lane Faison, Whitney Stoddard, and William Pierson, the "holy trinity" of Williams art-history professors, were responsible in large part for their career choices. What these remarkable teachers did, in the first place, was to take the curse of effeminacy off art history. "Whit Stoddard, whose specialty was medieval art, was incredibly wry and humorous and fast-paced," Varnedoe remembers. "He went to all the hockey games, and came to class on skis in the winter—he'd prop his skis up against the lectern." Bill Pierson taught architectural history. Varnedoe's favorite was Lane Faison, who focussed on nineteenth- and twentieth-century painting. Faison's wife had grown up in Savannah—she'd been a childhood friend of Varnedoe's mother, and they had gone to Smith together. "Lane loved what he was doing so much that he would just dilate in front of his slides," Varnedoe recalls. "He'd get you to talk about pictures, encourage you to look really hard and think hard, con you into feeling you might say something original or revealing. What mattered was your contact with the picture. That combination of discipline and delight in his teaching—he gave you the feeling that if you were more disciplined you would get more joy out of life somehow."

Varnedoe spent two of his college summers taking studio-art classes—first at the University of Georgia and then at the Rhode Island School of Design—but by the time he graduated from Williams, in 1967, he had given up the idea of becoming an illustrator. A career in art history now seemed more promising, and Williams, prompted by Lane Faison, helped things along by inviting him to come back for a year as a graduate assistant in the introductory art course. The football coach, Frank Navarro, also offered him a job as his assistant—Varnedoe had been a first-string defensive lineman on two winning teams at Williams. It seemed like an unbeatable combination, and there was the added incentive that graduate-student status, along with two serious knee injuries incurred playing football, would keep him out of Vietnam.

First, though, there was a postgraduate summer in Europe, during which, "because a girlfriend had told me to," he went to the Musée Rodin, in Paris, and was overcome by Rodin's work: "All the passion, suffering, and yearning in his sculpture, the intensity of it, swept over me." Back at Williams, he helped Frank Navarro guide the football team to an unbeaten season, and he read everything he could find on Rodin. Faison encouraged him to give a few lectures in the introductory art course; Kirk overprepared like crazy, but his lecture on Rodin's "The Gates of Hell" was a big hit. "That's where I learned he was really good on his feet," Faison recalls. "What stands out about Kirk in my memory is that ability to speak." Varnedoe knew by then that he would go on to graduate school. He was accepted at Columbia, and Frank Navarro, who had just been hired as the head football coach there, invited him to come along and coach the defensive line. Another unbeatable combination, it appeared. But then, one morning, he found a telegram tacked to his door in Williamstown, saying he'd been accepted at Stanford with a full fellowship. He went over to the Williams art-history department and asked whether anybody knew anything about Stanford. George Heard Hamilton, the former Yale art historian who had become the director of the Clark Art Institute at Williams in 1966, spoke up and said he'd just heard that Albert Elsen was moving to Stanford from Indiana University. Elsen was the world authority on Rodin. A lot of the stuff that Varnedoe had been reading was by him. When he learned that Elsen was indeed transferring to Stanford, Kirk left football and Columbia behind, and headed West.

Elsen became his second important mentor, after Lane Faison. "Al was pugnacious and competitive," Varnedoe remembers. "I'd always heard that he'd been the youngest tank commander in Italy in the Second World War, and he was a bit gruff, but deeply devoted to teaching and learning. His ideas about art and society were different from Lane's. For Lane, art was very much a personal experience; it was between you and the object. Al thought that art was entwined with social justice. He got the College Art Association to draft its first code of ethics. Creativity, freedom, liberal thought were all part of his belief in a good society." Varnedoe turned out to be one of only two graduate students there who were seriously interested in Rodin, and Elsen treated him accordingly. "Before I knew it, I had a desk in his office, I had complete access to his files, and he went out and got me a fellowship to go abroad that first summer, to work at the Musée Rodin."

Some Rodin drawings consigned to Sotheby's had recently been sent for evaluation to Elsen and other experts, who had decided they were fakes. Varnedoe's summer project, which became his graduate thesis, was to delve into the whole problem of authenticity and chronology in Rodin's graphic work. He spent that summer and the next one in Paris, doing research, perfecting his French, and playing rugby, his new sports passion. Elsen got his friend Carter Brown, then director of Washington's National Gallery, to take an interest in his prize student's research, and this led to an exhibition at the National Gallery in 1971-72 called

Matisse's 1915 "The Yellow Curtain," opposite, one of the major acquistions Varnedoe has made for the museum.

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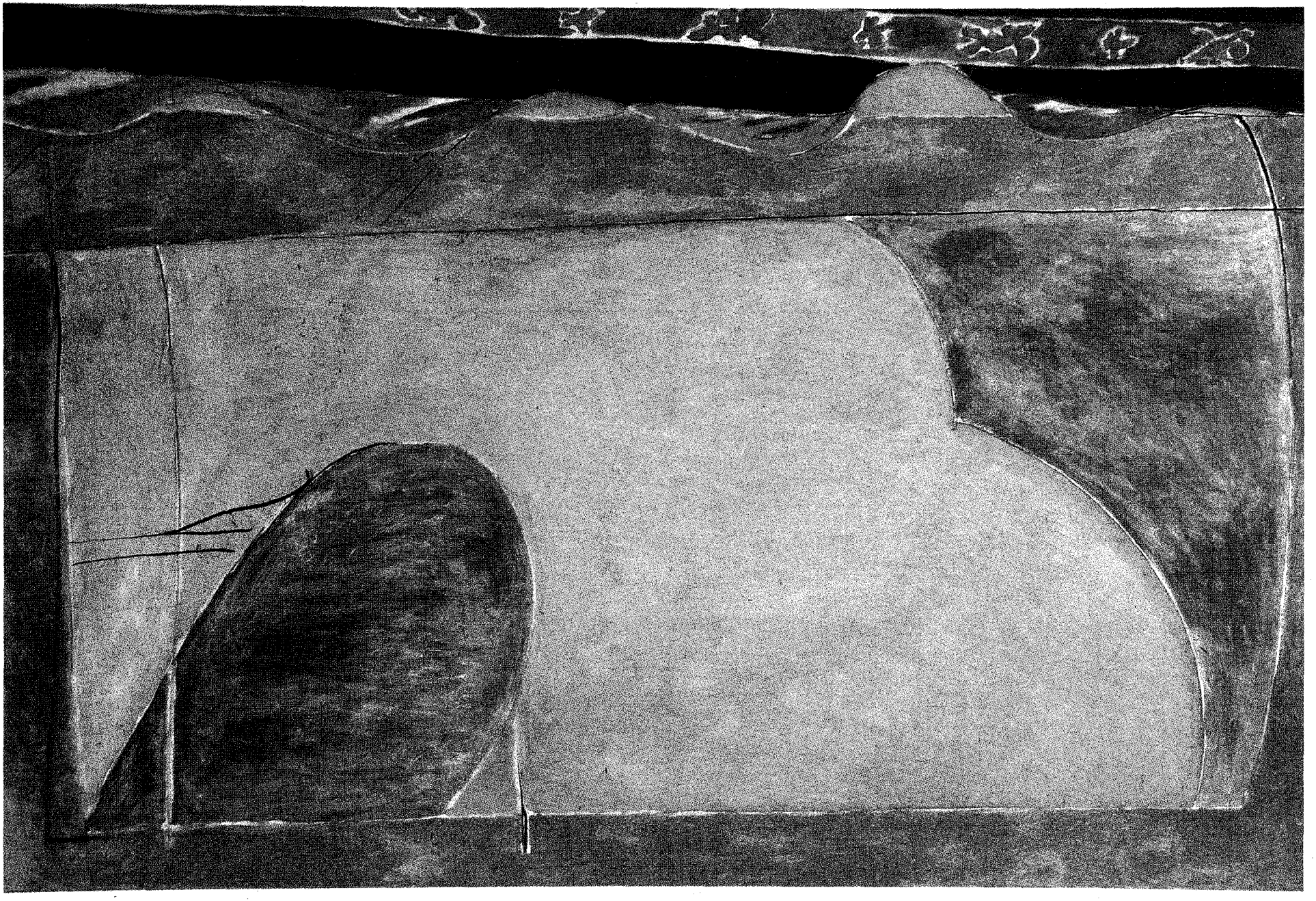
COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK



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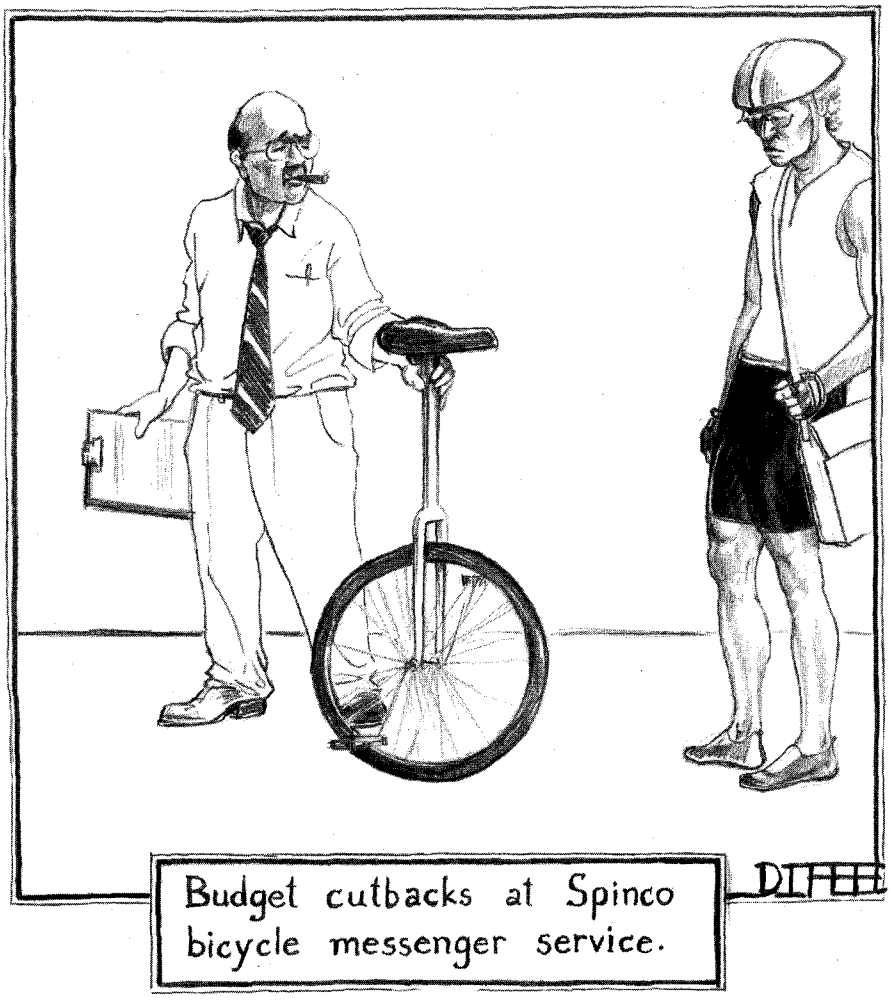
"Rodin Drawings, True and False," co-curated by Varnedoe and Elsen. Varnedoe and Elsen wrote the book-length catalogue, and Varnedoe's part of it became, a year later, his Ph.D. thesis.

Varnedoe was on the fast track to academic stardom. After leaving Stanford, in 1974, he taught for six years at Columbia, and also found time to organize two highly innovative museum exhibitions, one on modern portraits (at the Wildenstein Gallery), the other on Gustave Caillebotte, an underappreciated Impressionist painter (at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts). He also became interested in photography, put together a history-of-photography course, and published some incisive, revisionist essays on photography's influence, or lack of influence, on modern painting. To illustrate one of his photography articles in the magazine *Arts*, in 1975, he reproduced a work by a young California artist named Elyn Zimmerman, whom he didn't know. She wrote him a note of thanks, he wrote back, and when she came to New York six months later they arranged to meet. They met several times during the next year or so, in New York and in Paris, where Kirk spent part of 1977 on still another research fellowship, and in 1978 Elyn moved permanently to New York and they began living together.

In 1980, he moved to the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, the mecca of graduate art studies. Some of his students there still talk about his courses in Impressionism and modern art as the most thrilling teaching they've ever had. "We all thought we knew the material, and we did to a certain degree," says Jeffrey Weiss, who is now curator of modern and contemporary art at the National Gallery, "but Kirk had so many new things to say. And the way he said them, not just the brilliance but the passion—he engaged the material in such an intimate and dynamic way." He commuted by motorcycle from his downtown loft to the institute, on upper Fifth Avenue, but he observed academic sumptuary laws by wearing corduroy jackets with leather elbow patches. Legions of female students fell in love with him. One of them wrote him a love letter in lieu of an exam paper. Kirk was embarrassed; entirely happy with Elyn (they got married in 1983), he seemed to be unaware of his sexual magnetism. He didn't use a written text when he lectured, just a few words or phrases on a piece of paper, and he didn't do much to connect with his audience—no eye contact or pandering. What held the listener was his mastery of language. The lectures started at ten-fifteen, two mornings a week, but you had to be there at nine-thirty to get a seat, because so many others—students and non-students both—would come to hear him.



In his work on Gustave Caillebotte, Varnedoe had been strongly impressed by the writings of T. J. Clark, the art historian who broke the hammerlock of Greenbergian formalism in the nineteen-seventies by reintroducing social issues into the study of art. Clark was and is a Marxist thinker, however, and Varnedoe couldn't go along with his ideological underpinnings. He was even more opposed to the post-structuralist arguments of critics such as Rosalind Krauss, who applied the thinking of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and other French theorists to visual art. Varnedoe found some of the post-structuralist arguments cynical and sterile. "The notion that there's no such thing as creative enthusiasm, no such thing as personal engagement and pleasure in art, that there are only 'texts' to be deconstructed and exposed as masks for the hidden power games—I always found that terribly barren," he told me. "The complex thing is that these ideas have now been around long enough so that some artists buy into them. You can find a lot of art that reflects those premises, because it was made by people who agree with them."

Varnedoe continued to believe in the genius of the artist and the power of the individual art object. The post-structuralists held his muscular art history in contempt, but his students adored him, the institute made him a full (tenured) professor in 1984, and that same year he was awarded a five-year MacArthur Foundation fellowship (popularly known as "the genius grant") for his work as a teacher and art historian. He took some time to write a book, a sort of aesthetic credo, which was published six years later, in 1990, as "A Fine Disregard." The title came from a plaque he had seen at the

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Rugby School, in England, commemorating the origin of the rugby game, in 1823, when a student named William Webb Ellis, during an informal football (soccer) game, had suddenly picked up the ball and run with it, "with a fine disregard for the rules of football." (To Varnedoe, whose love of art was physical and intellectual in about equal parts, it seemed natural to anchor his argument with a sports metaphor.) Modern art had always been dependent on just such unplanned improvisations, Varnedoe argued. It "did not originate in the wholesale overthrow of all conventions and the protean creation of wholly new forms, nor in the impact of alien influences from outside the western world. . . . This kind of art is conceivable only within a system that is in crucial senses unfixed, inefficient, and unpredictable—a cultural system . . . where the rules themselves are what is constantly up for grabs." Not Hegelian historical imperatives, in other words, but Darwinian chance, contingency, and individual adaptation. "More than the forms themselves, it is this frame of mind, individually and socially, that is crucially new about modern art."

William Rubin, the absolute monarch of MOMA's painting and sculpture department, had been keeping an eye on Varnedoe for some time—since 1974, in fact, when Albert Elsen described him to Rubin as the best student he'd ever had. Rubin read Varnedoe's writings, went to some of his lectures, and helped him get loans for the portrait show while he was at Columbia. In 1981, Rubin invited Varnedoe to help him organize a large and important show at the museum called " 'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art." The show opened in 1984 and outraged the politically correct post-structural critics, who accused the museum of wrenching tribal artifacts out of context and using them to "validate" modern art, but nearly everyone else found it fascinating. As his next assignment, Rubin suggested that Varnedoe take over the MOMA showing of an exhibition called "Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture, and Design," which was being developed by independent curators in Vienna. Varnedoe passed this second test with great panache, writing the catalogue essay in record time and negotiating the loan of two major Gustav Klimt paintings that the Centre Pompidou had not been permitted to borrow the year before. By this time, in 1986, it was becoming clear to a number of people, including Varnedoe, that Rubin was grooming him to be his successor. Rubin, however, was also negotiating his own exit strategy from the museum. He wanted to relinquish his responsibilities while retaining his privileges (including partial salary), a neat trick that took two more years to pull off. When his retirement and Varnedoe's appointment to the job were announced, simultaneously, early in 1988, a number of people in the painting and sculpture department were far from pleased.

What the staff resented was not Varnedoe himself but the high-handed manner of his appointment. Some of the departmental curators had hoped that other candidates would at least be considered for the job—several would have liked to see it go to John Elderfield, then the head of the drawings department—but nobody had consulted them. Rubin had simply dictated his choice, and the director and the trustees had gone along with it. At this delicate stage of his career, moreover, Varnedoe finally made a wrong move. Barneys, the New York clothing store, had been doing a series of ads on "real people" wearing Barneys clothes, and Varnedoe, several months before he joined the museum, had agreed to be photographed by Annie Leibovitz for one of them. His modelling fee went to the Coalition for the Homeless, there was no mention of the museum in the ad copy (he was identified as an "art historian"), and he wasn't even allowed to keep the eleven-hundred-dollar Ermenegildo Zegna suit he wore. But, by a miracle of bad timing, the full-page ad ran in the *Times Magazine* on the same day that a long news piece on his accession to the museum job appeared in the newspaper's Arts & Leisure section. "And the heavens opened," as he put it. The sainted Alfred Barr, whose ascetic life style was part of his legend, presumably wept in Heaven.

The storms subsided, and Varnedoe survived. "Once I got there, I never felt an instant's hostility from anyone," he told me. Most of his new colleagues found him reserved, considerate, completely straightforward, and willing to listen. To a few of them he seemed arrogant, although not in the way Bill Rubin had been. Varnedoe had tremendous confidence in his own thought processes, but he didn't yell and intimidate people. "Kirk was an innocent, in some ways," according to one curator. "He was much more open than Bill, and also more shy." Rubin, only semi-retired, stayed on at the museum in an office just down the hall from Varnedoe's. This could have been disastrous, but "Bill never tried to interfere in anything I did," Varnedoe told me. "I could always knock on his door and ask what the background was on something, and he'd never hesitate to give his opinion, but he was the opposite of meddlesome."

There seems to be no question that Varnedoe made some wrong moves in organizing his first major exhibition as head of the department. "High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture," which opened in October of 1990, had grown out of conversations between Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik, a student of Varnedoe's at the N.Y.U. Institute of Fine Arts in the nineteen-eighties, and now my colleague at *The New Yorker*. It had seemed natural to invite Gopnik, who by this time had decided to be a writer rather than an art historian, to co-curate the show with him. The two were close friends. They worked together for many months, gathering an enormous amount of material on the subject. "So much had been said in the abstract," Varnedoe told me, "but no one had asked the hard empirical questions. Popular culture had been treated as some abstract, inert mass, and no one had looked into the particular dialogue between Miró and Krazy Kat, for instance, or between Philip Guston and R. Crumb, or between Picasso and the newspapers. I thought there was a world of information that would change our ideas about what the dialogue had really been." Varnedoe and Gopnik knew that the post-structuralist crowd would attack them for "privileging" high art over popular images, but they were both stunned by the avalanche of bad notices that the show received. Roberta Smith, the *Times* critic, called it a "crushingly familiar, superficial and one-sided" exhibition, and reviewers across the board seemed to take their cues from her. Few of them appeared to notice all the original research in the catalogue. There was a virulence to the attacks that seemed oddly personal—as though people had been lying in wait to ambush Varnedoe, the young prince of

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modern art, with his MacArthur fellowship and his Barneys ad and his high-profile job at MOMA. It was virtually his first public defeat, and it took him a long time to get over it. What hurt most, in a way, was a sense that he had let the museum down. His colleagues there were very supportive. Some of them had liked the show and some hadn't, but they were impressed by his willingness to admit his mistakes (not enough space given to contemporary work in the show; not enough consultation with his museum colleagues), and few of them, afterward, continued to think he was arrogant.

Varnedoe had been planning another thematic show at the museum, but the "High and Low" debacle led him to shelve it. Instead, for the next ten years, he played it safer by focussing on monographic exhibitions of artists (Cy Twombly, Jasper Johns, Jackson Pollock) whom he and the other curators in the department had decided were due for in-depth reëxamination. He worked hard to master the intricacies of building the collection. Rubin had filled major gaps in the art of the nineteen-forties and fifties, the Abstract Expressionist period; Varnedoe wanted to do the same for the sixties, seventies, and eighties, and by and large he has done so, pressing Leo Castelli to come through with his long-promised gift of Robert Rauschenberg's "Bed," acquiring major works by Johns, Rauschenberg, Twombly, Rosenquist, Warhol, Joseph Beuys, and Ellsworth Kelly, not to mention van Gogh's portrait of Joseph Roulin (believed to be the most expensive painting the museum has ever bought) and, more recently, Matisse's untypical and ravishing "Yellow Curtain." Some of these came as gifts, and others were bought with funds raised mainly by selling lesser works from the collection, the strategy that both Barr and Rubin had used extensively and astutely. Each acquisition required patient negotiations with dealers, owners, trustees, and the other curatorial departments at MOMA. Varnedoe had become a diplomat, a persuader, and a man of the world. To his friend Charles Stuckey, who has held curatorial positions in several museums, one of Varnedoe's assets was that he had "picked up the values of a previous generation of gentleman scholars—that a leading scholar should be someone who knows how to choose the best bottle of wine from a menu, someone who's travelled everywhere, who's read everything that's discussed in *The New York Review of Books* before it's discussed there."

Acknowledging that a good deal of contemporary art left him, if not cold, at least lukewarm, Varnedoe hired Robert Storr in 1990 to focus on that area. Storr, a painter who also taught and wrote about art, first said he wasn't interested in being a curator, but Varnedoe kept after him. "I was impressed by the clarity of Rob's thinking," he said, "and by his freedom from either trendiness or ideology. He had a genuine commitment to contemporary art, he had the sensibility of an artist, and he could write like a dream." Storr has turned out to be a first-rate curator, a maverick who goes, and usually gets, his own way on shows and acquisitions. Although they sometimes disagree on recent art and artists, Storr says that Varnedoe has given him consistently strong support, "and he's done so in circumstances where I think it probably cost him something." Varnedoe himself revived the earlier "Artist's Choice" series of exhibitions at the museum, in which contemporary artists are invited to choose and install a room of works from the collections. Chuck Close, whose spinal-artery collapse in 1988 left him a quadriplegic, says that Varnedoe's getting the museum to buy one of his paintings and then asking him to do an "Artist's Choice" show in 1991 gave a huge boost to his recovery, as an artist and as a person. "Every artist should have the experience of hearing this guy talk about what you do," he said last spring. "He's said so many interesting things about my work, and the changes that have taken place in it. He's helped me to crystallize my own ideas."

Since it opened, in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art has always needed more space. The last expansion, in 1980-1984, pleased virtually no one. In recent years, the trustees had pursued the idea of acquiring space in a separate building to show contemporary art, but most of the curators argued against that. They felt it

WAR

I

I keep rereading an article I found recently about how Mayan scribes,
who also were historians, polemicists, and probably poets as well,
when their side lost a war—not a rare occurrence, apparently,

there having been a number of belligerent kingdoms
constantly struggling for supremacy—would be disgraced and tortured,
their fingers broken and the nails torn out, and then be sacrificed.

Poor things—the reproduction from a glyph shows three:
one sprawls in slack despair, gingerly cradling his left hand with his right,
another gazes at his injuries with furious incomprehension,

while the last lifts his mutilated fingers to the conquering warriors
as though to elicit compassion for what's been done to him: they,
elaborately armored, glowering at one another, don't bother to look.

II

Like bomber pilots in our day, one might think, with their radar
and their infallible infrared, who soar, unheard, unseen, over generalized,
digital targets that mystically ignite, billowing out from vaporized cores.

Or like the Greek and Trojan gods, when they'd tire of their creatures,
"flesh ripped by the ruthless bronze," and wander off, or like the god
we think of as ours, who found mouths to speak for him, then left.

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They fought until nothing remained but rock and dust and shattered bone,
Troy's walls a waste, the stupendous Meso-American cities abandoned
to devouring jungle, tumbling on themselves like children's blocks.

And we, alone again under an oblivious sky, were quick to learn
how our best construals of divinity, our "Do unto, Love, Don't kill,"
could be easily garbled to canticles of vengeance and battle prayers.

III

Fall's first freshness, strange: the seasons' ceaseless wheel,
starlings starting south, the leaves annealing, ready to release,
yet still those columns of nothingness rise from their own ruins,

their twisted carcasses of steel and ash still fume, and still,
one by one, tacked up by hopeful lovers, husbands, wives, on walls,
in hospitals, the absent faces wait, already tattering, fading, going out.

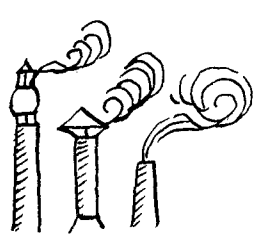
These things that happen in the particle of time we have to be alive,
these violations which almost more than any altar, ark, or mosque
embody sanctity by enacting so precisely sanctity's desecration.

These broken voices of bereavement asking of us what isn't to be given.
These suddenly smudged images of consonance and peace.
These fearful burdens to be borne, complicity, contrition, grief.

—*C. K. Williams*

was vitally important to see contemporary work in the context of what had come before it and made it possible—essentially the same argument that Alfred Barr and his colleagues had used in the nineteen-fifties, when they withdrew from an agreement with the Metropolitan Museum under which the Met would buy from MOMA certain older works that had become "classic," and MOMA would use the money to buy contemporary art. Every so often, in the years since then, the question of when the museum should stop buying new art would come up. A few trustees argued for cutting off at the year 2000, and making MOMA the definitive museum of twentieth-century art. That idea never got off the ground, though, and the efforts to promote post-modernism as an epochal turning point also fizzled. But the modernist faith required a new commitment, and in 1994 the trustees made it. They voted to go ahead and fund a much larger museum on the existing premises, and to hire a new director, Glenn Lowry, to get it built.

A wide range of people received invitations to some of the early planning sessions, the first of which took place in 1996 at the Rockefeller family estate in Pocantico Hills, New York. Architects, critics, philosophers, artists, and businesspeople all had their say, but the most influential voices, then and later, were probably those of MOMA's chief curators, including Varnedoe. (Ronald Lauder, the chairman of MOMA's board of trustees, prefaced his remarks to that first Pocantico Hills planning session by saying that he had learned two things about museum work: "Make sure you have a good night's sleep before agreeing to spend money, and never follow Kirk Varnedoe as a speaker.") Once the crucial decision had been made to give the commission to someone from the younger generation of architects (younger than Frank Gehry, Richard Meier, and other international superstars), the choice eventually came down to three finalists: Bernard Tschumi, the dean of Columbia University's Department of Architecture; the Swiss firm of Herzog & de Meuron; and Taniguchi, who was hardly known outside Japan. The finalists all spent time talking with the chief curators. Varnedoe and several of the others were leaning toward Herzog & de Meuron, who had already won the commission for the Tate Modern, and who struck them as being very knowledgeable about modern art, but when they got their first look at the presentation models, in a conference room of the architecture and design department at MOMA, the chief curators opted unanimously for Taniguchi. "He had managed to address every issue," according to Varnedoe. "We kept looking, and saying, 'My God, he's solved that one, too!' The clarity and elegance of the thought, the rigor of the execution, the beautiful functionality—it was overwhelming."



Taniguchi's building, with its unassuming, rather conventional steel and glass and stone forms, would never rival the visual-knockout factor of Gehry's free-form Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, but to Varnedoe and his fellow-curators, and to a majority of the trustees, it seemed to offer a near-ideal balance of intimate and large-scale galleries, a rationalization of support functions, and a mastery of space and light which the museum had never approached before, in a design whose clearly articulated elements would fit suavely into the midtown urban context. No architectural project on this scale ever proceeds smoothly, however, and dire rumors keep cropping up. The original six-hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar budget is said to have risen to eight hundred million. There are persistent reports that the museum, in its struggle to keep costs from escalating further, has pushed Taniguchi aside. The ongoing structural and budget decisions, one hears, are being made by the New York firm of Kohn Pedersen Fox, the executive architects on the job, and some of the details and materials that enchanted the curators in Taniguchi's original plan may not survive. The post-September 11th economic climate will certainly make it

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harder to meet the budget, but, with more than five hundred million dollars already raised, and almost half the museum already closed for reconstruction, there appears to be no doubt that the new MOMA will get built.

In 1996, during a Christmas trip to India with Elyn, Varnedoe came down with what he thought was a severe stomach virus. Antibiotics didn't help, and three months later, when the problem seemed to be getting worse, his doctor put him in the hospital for tests, which showed that he had advanced colon cancer. He was operated on the following week, and he spent most of that summer with Elyn at their modest country house in upstate New York, undergoing regular doses of chemotherapy. The doctors did not really expect him to pull through, but he did. Varnedoe has always been very strong, physically as well as mentally, and he kept himself in shape by rowing four miles a day on a local lake in his single shell—the preferred exercise of his mature years. He and Elyn, who had not been able to have children, loved being alone there, reading and cooking and taking Leo, their sweet-tempered Chow Chow, for walks, and listening to music—Tanglewood is only a twenty-five-minute drive from their house. Elyn, now a well-known artist and sculptor (she has a show on view this month at the Gagosian gallery), is frequently commissioned to do works and installations in public places.

Varnedoe returned to the museum in the fall, part time at first, but soon enough he was putting in full days and picking up his prodigious workload. The Pollock retrospective, opening in 1998, was, among other things, a personal triumph for him, a masterfully organized and installed exhibition whose scholarship was on the high level set by Barr and maintained by Rubin. He had come into his own in the job. As areas of the museum began shutting down, earlier this year, and moving into temporary quarters in Queens, he was thinking about the future reinstallation of the painting and sculpture collection in the new, Taniguchi-designed spaces. "Being able to include the great Twombly I bought, and other works we've acquired from the seventies and eighties, and at the same time to show more of the richness of the historical collection—that's a major thing for me," he said last spring. Beneath the surface, though, Varnedoe was starting to wonder how much longer he wanted to do this. The job had changed, for one thing. There were more curatorial meetings than there used to be—a lot more, once the planning for the expansion got under way. Glenn Lowry, who had been a downhill ski racer when he was in college, was a high-energy director, ambitious and competitive and demanding; he wanted to review exhibition designs, and to be involved with the curatorial thinking in all departments. While no apparent tensions had ever surfaced between him and Varnedoe, it was clear that Lowry would not be amused if one of his chief curators was misidentified as the director.

The changes, though, went much deeper than directorial style. Art itself was changing, in ways that tended to erode the dominance of painting and sculpture in the galleries and at the museum. Andreas Gursky's stunning, large-scale photographs, which were shown in the main painting galleries at MOMA last winter, made the line between painting and photography seem less clear than ever, and the proliferating herds of artists who worked in video and other media-based techniques made Barr's original division of the museum into seven sovereign curatorial departments seem increasingly obsolete. The competition for significant art works, meanwhile, was growing fiercer year by year. Barr had had no real competition when he began collecting—there were virtually no other museums of modern art in 1929—but today every city with modest cultural ambitions seems to have at least one. The success of entrepreneurial museum directors like Thomas Krens, who yearns to cover the planet with branches of the Guggenheim, has put increased emphasis on the marketing of museums as viable (money-earning) enterprises, populist palaces that can draw huge, paying crowds with blockbuster exhibitions of motorcycles, or designer clothes, or other artifacts that do not exactly cry out for art-historical scholarship. The Museum of Modern Art has steadfastly resisted this trend, but the pressures are out there. Varnedoe, among others, had grave reservations about the museum's recent decision to establish a Web site in collaboration with the Tate, in London. The plan, as the marketing honchos explained it, would be to "leverage the brand identity" of both museums in selling merchandise from their gift shops and providing other services, and Varnedoe, who gags at language like that, was very relieved when the Tate dropped out and the plan was put on hold.

At the deepest level, Varnedoe had remained primarily a teacher. He loved doing exhibitions, and he loved bringing new works into the collection, but more than anything he loved to lecture and write and think about the multiple meanings of modern art. "Kirk is passionate for lecturing," Mary Lea Bandy, the chief curator of the recently renamed Department of Film and Media—it used to be Film and Video—said last spring. "He has a kind of fervor of the pulpit when he speaks, a mission to convert people." He had been invited to deliver the Mellon lectures at the National Gallery in the spring of 2003—the most distinguished art-history lecture series in this country. He was also contemplating a new book, a study of three great Southern-born artists—Rauschenberg, Johns, and Twombly—and the connections that he, from his own, Savannah-born perspective, sees running through their work, but the mounting pressures and disruptions of the museum expansion made it difficult to find time for much long-range thinking.

Last April, out of the blue, he got a telephone call from a faculty member of the Institute for Advanced Study, in Princeton. This world-famous, seventy-one-year-old private organization, whose first invited scholar was Albert Einstein, offers generous support and absolute academic freedom to a small number of leading scholars in several disciplines, one of which, as Varnedoe found when he went down for an interview, is art history. Irving Lavin, the sole art historian on the faculty there, had decided to retire, and Varnedoe was asked if he would consider taking his place. It was a fairly thrilling prospect. Freed of administrative obligations and financial worries, he would be able to pursue his own research, and at the same time, since the institute discouraged ivory-tower exclusiveness in its faculty, he could lecture and teach wherever he wanted, and even continue to organize exhibitions at MOMA or other museums. The appointment would require him to spend six months of the year in

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Princeton—not exactly a hardship posting, since the institute helps its faculty to find affordable housing. Against all that lay Varnedoe's deep loyalty to the Museum of Modern Art. He had always been a team player, willing to subordinate his own ambitions to those of the institution. He would greatly miss his museum colleagues—"those dedicated, really intelligent people with the highest standards in the field," as he put it to me, and he would also miss his daily contact with the "sheer sensory pleasure of the collections, the power and greatness of those paintings and sculptures, from which I always learn something." Museum work had held no particular appeal for him, he said, when he left his tenured professorship at the N.Y.U. Institute of Fine Arts for MOMA. "But the job that Alfred Barr had defined, that Bill Rubin held, came with the imperative to do serious scholarship, and it involved working with this fantastic collection, and it had such an aura to it. How could anyone refuse? I'd always thought, though, that in the long run I might go back to teaching. And, honestly, there were things about the way the museum world was moving, and about the way this particular museum works, that had begun to produce a sense of frustration over the last couple of years." Varnedoe notified the Institute for Advanced Study, at any rate, that he was interested in the position, and while the institute began its lengthy process of nomination and ratification he wrestled with his conscience.

In June, the Varnedoes celebrated Kirk's fifth year without a recurrence of colon cancer. A week later, a routine chest X-ray produced devastating news. The cancer had returned after all, this time in his lungs. There had been no warning, no symptoms of any kind—weirdly enough, he felt fine. The disease had invaded the pleura surrounding the lung, and it was inoperable. Once again, he took sick leave from the museum, went to the country with Elyn, and began a new course of chemotherapy. Once again, his physical and mental strength gave him and the doctors at Sloan-Kettering some hope, although nobody was minimizing the risks. "I'm told that my cancer is probably incurable but not untreatable," he said recently. "It's an 'indolent,' or slow-growing, type, and the hope is that it can be suppressed, or kept at its present level—managed, like diabetes." Aside from one scary reaction to chemotherapy, which sent him to the hospital with a cardiac "episode" and necessitated an adjustment in his drug protocol, he was able to lead a fairly normal life last summer, spending time in the country and exercising to keep up his strength. "Back in 1996," he said, "someone persuaded me to go on the Internet and research colon cancer. It didn't take me more than fifteen minutes to realize you could read anything you wanted that way. I decided that if I have a year to live I am not going to spend it in this kind of crap. I will not become a professional patient. At some point, I may be flying to Switzerland to get unborn-lamb cells injected, but I'm a long way from that now. I'm just riding the horse they give me."

"Lately, I've begun to understand—and forgive—my parents."

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The positive element in this situation is that it resolved his professional dilemma. Life, it seemed, was forcing him to do what he wanted. On October 3rd, his appointment to the Institute for Advanced Study was formally confirmed, and he told the museum he was leaving. Glenn Lowry was gracious—he said that one of the tasks he'd never expected to have was to replace Varnedoe. Agnes Gund, the museum's indispensable president, "lit up like a light bulb when I told her," Varnedoe said. "She had heard rumors, and was afraid I was just going to say I was quitting." Varnedoe will surely be consulted about the choice of the next chief curator of painting and sculpture, but, unlike Barr and Rubin, he will not dictate his successor. The job and the museum have moved beyond that.

"I'm happy to say I'm going to be the institute's first modern-art historian," he said the other day. "I think my work is going to stay concentrated in that field. But there are certain large problems in the history of art that I want to think about. The demands of the museum job require that you be an apostle for something. It takes all your time and energy, and there's no time to think about cave painting, for example, or Greek art, or the new work on Caravaggio. One of the things I would welcome is a chance to be a little less parochial. Right now, of course, we're all still reeling in the wake of September 11th. One of the minor long-range effects, I think, is that people whose stock has been entirely in contemporary art, who've fed in recent years on the issues of novelty, irony, and so forth, are going to be brought up short, and that the broader questions of the relation of art to culture are going to come forward. It seems as though, if there was ever a time to take two steps back and try to think about what's really important and what's fluff, this is it." ♦

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FICTION

FIND AND REPLACE

BY ANN BEATTIE

True story: my father died in a hospice on Christmas Day, while a clown dressed in big black boots and a beard was down the hall doing his clown-as-Santa act for the amusement of a man my father had befriended, who was dying of ALS. I wasn't there; I was in Paris to report on how travelling art was being uncrated—a job I got through my cousin Jasper, who works for a New York City ad agency more enchanted with consultants than Julia Child is with chickens. For years, Jasper's sending work my way has allowed me to keep going while I write the Great American I Won't Say Its Name.

I'm superstitious. For example, I thought that even though my father was doing well, the minute I left the country he would die. Which he did.

On a globally warmed July day, I flew into Fort Myers and picked up a rental car and set off for my mother's to observe (her terminology) the occasion of my father's death, six months after the event. It was actually seven months later, but because I was in Toronto checking out sites for an HBO movie, and there was no way I could make it on June 25th, my mother thought the most respectful thing to do would be to wait until the same day, one month later. I don't ask my mother a lot of questions; when I can, I simply try to keep the peace by doing what she asks. As mothers go, she's not demanding. Most requests are simple and have to do with her notions of propriety, which often center on the writing of notes. I have friends who are so worried about their parents that they see them every weekend, I have friends who phone home every day, friends who cut their parents' lawn because no one can be found to do it. With my mother, it's more a question of: Will I please send Mrs. Fawnes a condolence card because of her dog's death, or, Will I be so kind as to call a florist near me in New York and ask for an arrangement to be delivered on the birthday of a friend of my mother's, because ordering flowers when a person isn't familiar with the florist can be a disastrous experience. I don't buy flowers, even from Korean markets, but I asked around, and apparently the bouquet that arrived at the friend's door was a great success.

My mother has a million friends. She keeps the greeting-card industry in business. She would probably send greetings on Groundhog Day, if the cards existed. Also, no one ever seems to disappear from her life (with the notable exception of my father). She still exchanges notes with a maid who cleaned her room at the Swift House Inn fifteen years ago—and my parents were only there for the weekend.

I know I should be grateful that she is such a friendly person. Many of my friends bemoan the fact that their parents get into altercations with everybody, or that they won't socialize at all.

So: I flew from New York to Fort Myers, took the shuttle to the rental-car place, got in the car and was gratified that the air-conditioning started to blow the second I turned on the ignition, and leaned back, closed my eyes, and counted backward, in French, from thirty, in order to unwind before I began to drive. I then put on loud music, and adjusted the bass, and set off, feeling around on the steering wheel to see if there was cruise control, because if I got one more ticket my insurance was going to be cancelled. Or maybe I could get my mother to write a nice note pleading my case.

Anyway, all the preliminaries to my story are nothing but that: the almost inevitable five minutes of hard rain midway through the trip; the beautiful bridge; the damned trucks expelling herculean farts. I drove to Venice, singing along with Mick Jagger about beasts of burden. When I got to my mother's street, which is, it seems, the only quarter-mile-long stretch of America watched directly by God, through the eyes of a Florida policeman in a radar-equipped car, I set the cruise control for twenty and coasted to her driveway.

Hot as it was, my mother was outside, sitting in a lawn chair flanked by pots of red geraniums. Seeing my mother always puts me into a state of confusion. Whenever I first see her, I become disoriented.

"Ann!" she said. "Oh, are you exhausted? Was the flight terrible?"

It's the subtext that depresses me: the assumption that to arrive anywhere you have to pass through Hell. In fact, you do. I had been on a USAir flight, seated in the last seat in the last row, and every time suitcases thudded into the baggage compartment my spine reverberated painfully. My travelling companions had been an obese woman with a squirming baby and her teen-age son, whose ears she squeezed when he wouldn't settle down, producing shrieks and enough flailing to topple my cup of apple juice. I just sat there silently, and I could feel that I was being too quiet and bringing everyone down.

My mother's face was still quite pink. Shortly before my father's death, after she had a little skin cancer removed from above her lip, she went to the dermatologist for microdermabrasion. She was wearing the requisite hat with a wide brim and Ari Onassis sunglasses. She had on her uniform: shorts covered with a flap, so that it looked as if she were wearing a skirt, and a T-shirt embellished with sequins. Today's featured a lion with glittering black ears and, for all I knew, a correctly colored nose. Its eyes, which you might think would be sequins, were painted on. Blue.

"Love you," I said, hugging her. I had learned not to answer her questions. "Were you sitting out here in the sun waiting for me?"

She had learned, as well, not to answer mine. "We can have lemonade,"

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she said. "Paul Newman. And that man's marinara sauce—I never cook it myself anymore."

The surprise came almost immediately, just after she pressed a pile of papers into my hands: thank-you notes from friends she wanted me to read; a letter she didn't understand regarding a magazine subscription that was about to expire; an ad she'd gotten about a vacuum cleaner she wanted my advice about buying; two tickets to a Broadway play she'd bought ten years before that she and my father had never used (what was being asked of me?); and—most interesting, at the bottom of the pile—a letter from Drake Dreodadus, her neighbor, asking her to move in with him. "Go for the vacuum instead," I said, trying to laugh it off.

"I've already made my response," she said. "And you may be very surprised to know what I said."

Drake Dreodadus had spoken at my father's memorial service. Before that, I had met him only once, when he was going over my parents' lawn with a metal detector. But no: as my mother reminded me, I'd had a conversation with him in the drugstore, one time when she and I stopped in to buy medicine for my father. He was a pharmacist.

"The only surprising thing would be if you'd responded in the affirmative," I said.

" 'Responded in the affirmative!' Listen to *you*."

"Mom," I said, "tell me this is not something you'd give a second of thought to."

"Several *days* of thought," she said. "I decided that it would be a good idea, because we're very compatible."

"Mom," I said, "you're joking, right?"

"You'll like him when you get to know him," she said.

"Wait a minute," I said. "This is someone you hardly know—or am I being naïve?"

"Oh, Ann, at my age you don't necessarily want to know someone extremely well. You want to be compatible, but you can't let yourself get all involved in the dramas that have already played out—all those accounts of everyone's youth. You just want to be—you want to come to the point where you're compatible."

I was sitting in my father's chair. The doilies on the armrests that slid around and drove him crazy were gone. I looked at the darker fabric, where they had been. Give me a sign, Dad, I was thinking, looking at the shiny fabric as if it were a crystal ball. I was clutching my glass, which was sweating. "Mom—you can't be serious," I said.

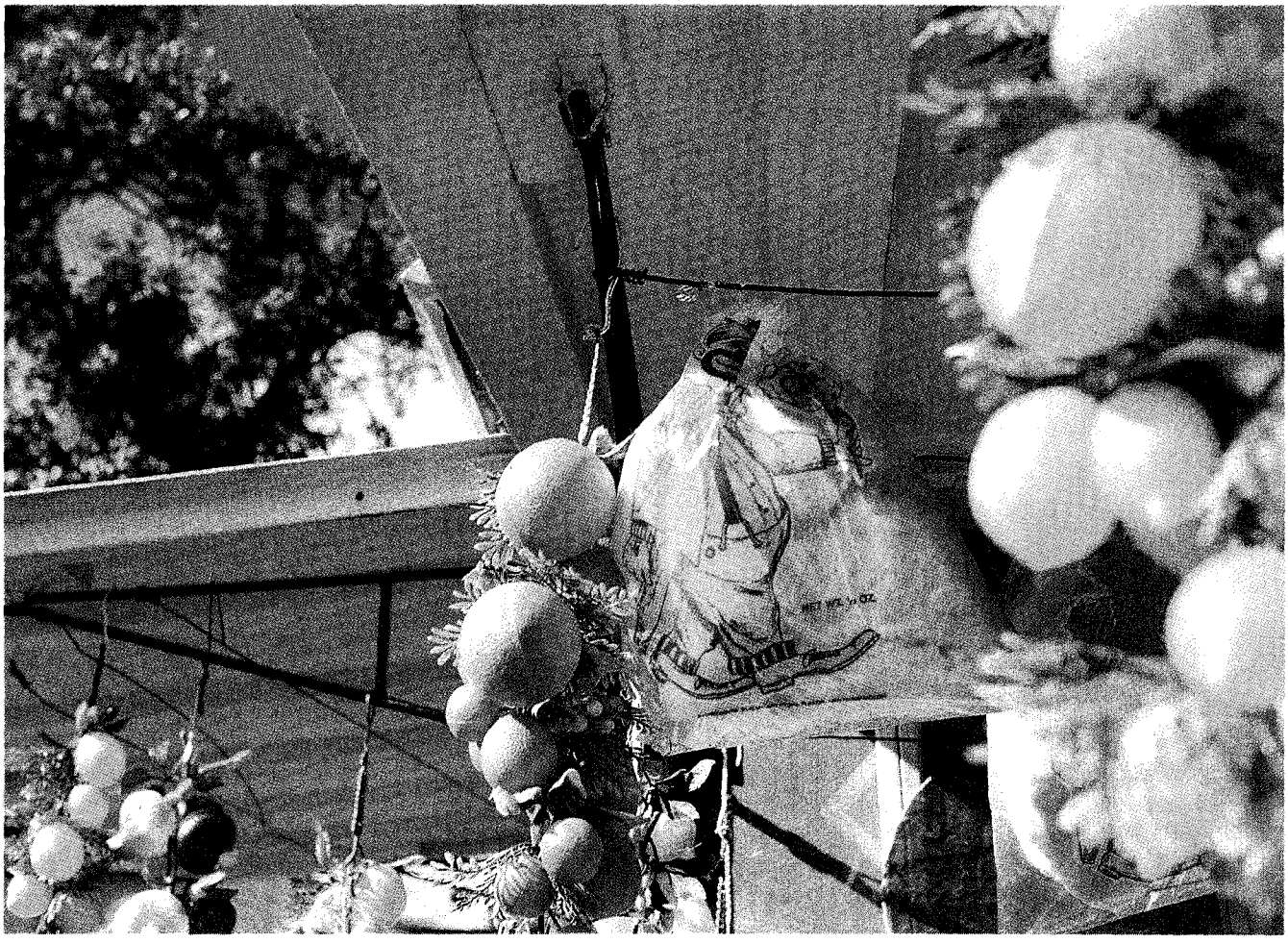
She winked.

"Mom—"

"I'm going to live in his house, which is on the street perpendicular to Palm Avenue. You know, one of the big houses they built at first, before the zoning people got after them and they put up these little cookie-cutter numbers."

"You're moving in with him?" I said, incredulous. "But you've got to keep this house. You are keeping it, aren't you? If it doesn't work out."

"Your father thought he was a fine



HUGER FOOTE, "UNTITLED" (1998)/DAVID LUSK GALLERY, MEMPHIS

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man," she said. "They used to be in a Wednesday-night poker game, I guess you know. If your father had lived, Drake was going to teach him how to E-mail."

"With a, with—you don't have a computer," I said stupidly.

"Oh, Ann, I wonder about you sometimes. As if your father and I couldn't have driven to Circuit City, bought a computer—and he could have E-mailed you! He was excited about it."

"Well, I don't—" I seemed unable to finish any thought. I started again. "This could be a big mistake," I said. "He only lives one block away. Is it really necessary to move in with him?"

"Was it necessary for you to live with Richard Klingham in Vermont?"

I had no idea what to say. I had been staring at her. I dropped my eyes a bit and saw the blue eyes of the lion. I dropped them to the floor. New rug. When had she bought a new rug? Before or after she made her plans?

"When did he ask you about this?" I said.

"About a week ago," she said.

"He did this by mail? He just wrote you a note?"

"If we'd had a computer, he could have E-mailed!" she said.

"Mom, are you being entirely serious about this?" I said. "What, exactly—"

"What, *exactly*, what *one single thing*, what *absolutely* compelling reason did you have for living with Richard Klingham?"

"Why do you keep saying his last name?" I said.

"Most of the old ladies I know, their daughters would be delighted if their mothers remembered a boyfriend's first name, let alone a last name," she said. "Senile old biddies. Really. I get sick of them myself. I see why it drives the children crazy. But I don't want to get off on that. I want to tell you that we're going to live in his house for a while, but are thinking seriously of moving to Tucson. He's very close to his son, who's a builder there. They speak *every single day* on the phone, *and* they E-mail," she said. She was never reproachful; I decided that she was just being emphatic.

Just a short time before, I had relaxed, counting *trois*, *deux*, *un*. Singing with Mick Jagger. Inching slowly toward my mother's house.

"But this shouldn't intrude on a day meant to respect the memory of your father," she said, almost whispering. "I want you to know, though, and I really mean it: I feel that your father would be pleased that I'm compatible with Drake. I feel it deep in my heart." She thumped the lion's face. "He would give this his blessing, if he could," she said.

"Is he around?" I said.

"Listen to you, disrespecting the memory of your father by joking about his not being among us!" she said. "That is in the poorest taste, Ann."

I said, "I meant Drake."

"Oh," she said. "I see. Yes. Yes, he is. But right now he's at a matinée. We thought that you and I should talk about this privately."

"I assume he'll be joining us for dinner tonight?"

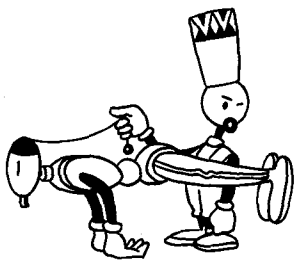
"Actually, he's meeting some old friends in Sarasota. A dinner that was set up before he knew you were coming. You know, it's a wonderful testament to a person when they retain old friends. Drake has an active social life with old friends."

"Well, it's just perfect for him, then. He can have his social life, and you and he can be compatible."

"You've got a sarcastic streak—you always had it," my mother said. "You might ask yourself why you've had fallings out with so many friends."

"So this is an occasion to criticize me? I understand, by the way, that you were also criticizing me when you implied that you didn't understand my relationship with Richard—or perhaps the reason I ended it? The reason I ended it was because he and an eighteen-year-old student of his became Scientologists and asked me if I wanted to come in the van with them to Santa Monica. He dropped his cat off at the animal shelter before they set out, so I guess I wasn't the only one to get shafted."

"Oh!" she said. "I didn't know!"



"You didn't know because I never told you."

"Oh, was it *horrible* for you? Did you have any *idea*?"

She was right, of course: I had left too many friends behind. I told myself it was because I travelled so much, because my life was so chaotic. But, really, maybe I should have sent a few more cards myself. Also, maybe I should have picked up on Richard's philandering. Everybody else in town knew.

"I thought we could have some Paul Newman's and then maybe when we had dessert we could light those little devotional lights and have a moment's silence, remembering your father."

"Fine," I said.

"We'll need to go to the drugstore to get candles," she said. "They burned out the night Drake and I had champagne and toasted our future." She stood. She put on her hat. "I can drive," she said.

I straggled behind her like a little kid in a cartoon. I could imagine myself kicking dirt. Some man she hardly knew. It was the last thing I'd expected. "So give me the scenario," I said. "He wrote you a note and you wrote back, and then he came for champagne?"

"Oh, all right, so it hasn't been a great romance," my mother said. "But a person gets tired of all the highs and lows. You get to the point where you need things to be a little easier. In fact, I didn't write him a note. I thought about it for three days, then I just knocked on his door."

The candles were cinnamon-scented and made my throat feel constricted. She lit them at the beginning of the meal, and by the end she seemed to have forgotten about talking about my father. She mentioned a book she'd been reading about Arizona. She offered to show me some pictures, but they, too, were forgotten. We watched a movie on TV about a dying ballerina. As she died, she imagined herself doing a pas de deux with an obviously gay actor. We ate M&M's, which my mother has always maintained are not really candy, and went to bed early. I slept on the foldout sofa. She made me wear one of her nightgowns, saying that Drake might knock on the door in the morning. I travelled light: toothbrush, but nothing to sleep in. Drake did not knock the next morning, but he did put

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a note under the door saying that he had car problems and would be at the repair shop. My mother seemed very sad. "Maybe you'd want to write him a teeny little note before you go?" she said.

"What could I possibly say?"

"Well, you think up dialogue for characters, don't you? What would you imagine yourself saying?" She put her hands to her lips. "Never mind," she said. "If you do write, I'd appreciate it if you'd at least give me a sense of what you said."

"Mom," I said, "please give him my best wishes. I don't want to write him a note."

She said, "He's DrDrake@aol.com, if you want to E-mail." I nodded. Best just to nod. I thought that I might have reached the point she'd talked about, where you have an overwhelming desire for things to be simple.

We hugged, and I kissed her well-moisturized cheek. She came out to the front lawn to wave as I pulled away.

On the way back to the airport, there was a sudden, brief shower that forced me to the shoulder of the road, during which time I thought that there were obvious advantages in having a priest to call on. I felt that my mother needed someone halfway between a lawyer and a psychiatrist, and that a priest would be perfect. I conjured up a poker-faced Robert De Niro in clerical garb as Cyndi Lauper sang about girls who just wanted to have fun.

But I wasn't getting away as fast as I hoped. Back at the car-rental lot, my credit card was declined. "It might be my handheld," the young man said to me, to cover either my embarrassment or his. "Do you have another card, or would you please try inside?"

I didn't know why there was trouble with the card. It was AmEx, which I always pay immediately, not wanting to forfeit Membership Rewards points by paying late. I was slightly worried. Only one woman was in front of me in line, and after two people behind the counter got out of their huddle, both turned to me. I chose the young man.

"There was some problem processing my credit card outside," I said.

The man took the card and swiped it. "No problem now," he said. "It is my pleasure to inform you that today we can offer you an upgrade to a Ford Mustang for only an additional seven dollars a day."

"I'm returning a car," I said. "The machine outside wouldn't process my card."

"Thank you for bringing that to my attention," the young man said. He was wearing a badge that said "Trainee" above his name. His name, written smaller, was Jim Brown. He had a kind face and a bad haircut. "Your charges stay on American Express, then?"

An older man walked over to him. "What's up?" he said.

"The lady's card was declined, but I ran it through and it was fine," he said.

The older man looked at me. It was cooler inside, but, still, I felt as if I were melting. "She's returning, not renting?" the man said, as if I weren't there.

"Yes, sir," Jim Brown said.

This was getting tedious. I reached for the receipt.

"What was that about the Mustang?" the man said.

"I mistakenly thought—"

"I mentioned to him how much I like Mustangs," I said.

Jim Brown frowned.

"In fact, how tempted I am to rent one right now."

Both the older man and Jim Brown looked at me suspiciously.

"Ma'am, you're returning your Mazda, right?" Jim Brown said, examining the receipt.

"I am, but now I think I'd like to rent a Mustang."

"Write up a Mustang, nine dollars extra," the older man said.

"I quoted her seven," Jim Brown said.

"Let me see." The man punched a few keys on the keyboard. "Seven," he said, and walked away.

Jim Brown and I both watched him go. Jim Brown leaned a little forward, and said in a low voice, "Were you trying to help me out?"

"No, not at all. Just thought having a Mustang for a day might be fun. Maybe a convertible."

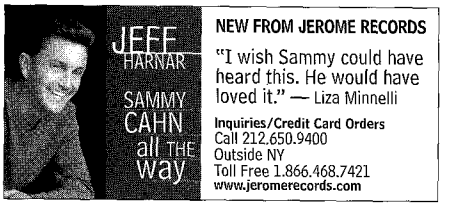
"The special only applies to the regular Mustang," he said.

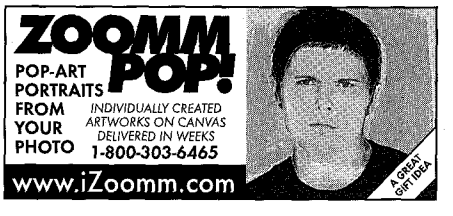
"It's only money," I said.

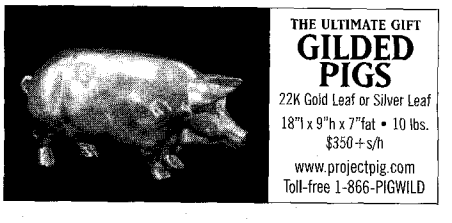
He hit a key, looked at the monitor.

"One day, returning tomorrow?" he said.

"Right," I said. "Do I have a choice about the color?"







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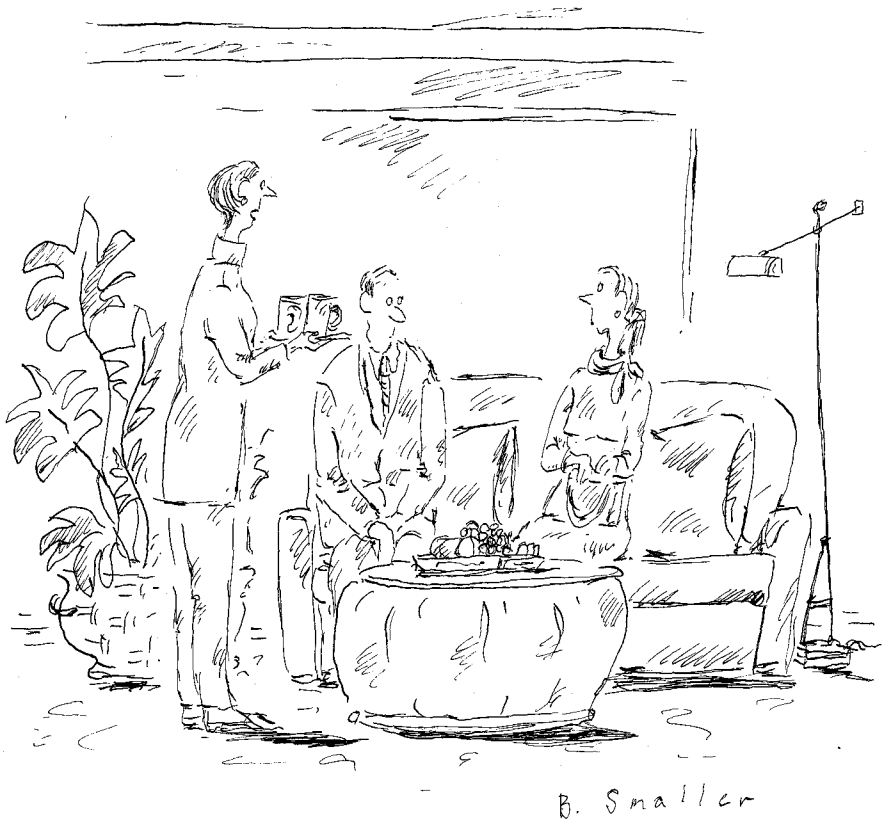

"Larry is a white male, but he hasn't been able to do much with it."

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He had a crooked front tooth. That and the bad haircut were distracting. He had lovely eyes, and his hair was a nice color, like a fawn, but the tooth and the jagged bangs got your attention, instead of his attributes.

"There's a red and two white," he said. "You don't have a job you've got to get back to?"

I said, "I'll take the red."

He looked at me.

"I'm freelance," I said.

He smiled. "Impulsive, too," he said.

I nodded. "The perks of being self-employed."

"At what?" he said. "Not that it's any of my business."

"Jim, any help needed?" the older man said, coming up behind him.

In response, Jim looked down and began to hit keys. It increased his schoolboyish quality: he bit his bottom lip, concentrating. The printer began to print out.

"I used to get in trouble for being impulsive," he said. "Then I got diagnosed with A.D.D. My grandmother said, 'See, I told you he couldn't help it.' That was what she kept saying to my mom: 'Couldn't help it.' " He nodded vigorously. His bangs flopped on his forehead. Outside, they would have stuck to his skin, but inside it was air-conditioned.

His mentioning A.D.D. reminded me of the ALS patient—the man I'd never met. I had a clearer image of a big-footed, bulbous-nosed clown. If I breathed deeply, I could still detect the taste of cinnamon in my throat. I declined every option of coverage, initialling beside every X. He looked at my scribbled initials. "What kind of writing?" he said. "Mysteries?"

"No. Stuff that really happens."

"Don't people get mad?" he said.

The older man was looming over the woman at the far end of the counter. They were trying not to be too obvious about watching us. Their heads were close together as they whispered.

"People don't recognize themselves. And, in case they might, you just program the computer to replace one name with another. So, in the final version, every time the word 'Mom' comes up it's replaced with 'Aunt Begonia,' or something."

He creased the papers, putting them in a folder. "A-8," he said. "Out the door, right, all the way down against the fence."

"Thanks," I said. "And thanks for the good suggestion."

"No problem," he said. He seemed to be waiting for something. At the exit, I looked over my shoulder; sure enough, he was looking at me. So was the older man, and so was the woman he'd been talking to. I ignored them. "You wouldn't program your computer to replace 'Mustang convertible' with one of those creepy Geo Metros, would you?"

"No, ma'am," he said, smiling. "I don't know how to do that."

"Easy to learn," I said. I gave him my best smile and walked out to the parking lot, where the heat rising from the asphalt made me feel like my feet were sliding over a well-oiled griddle. The key was in the car. It didn't look like the old Mustang at all. The red was very bright and a little unpleasant, at least on such a hot day. The top was already down. I turned the key and saw that the car had less than five hundred miles on it. The seat was comfortable enough. I adjusted the mirror, pulled on my seat belt, and drove to the exit, with no desire to turn on the radio. "That's a beauty," the man in the kiosk said, inspecting the folder and handing it back.

"Just got it on impulse," I said.

"That's the best way," he said. He gave a half salute as I drove off.

And then it hit me: the grim reality that I had to talk sense to her, I had to do whatever it took, including insulting her great good friend Drake, so he wouldn't clean her out financially, devastate her emotionally, take advantage, dominate her—who knew what he had in mind? He'd avoided me on purpose—he didn't want to hear what I'd say. What did he think? That her busy daughter would conveniently disappear on schedule, or that she might be such a liberal that their plans sounded intriguing? Or maybe he thought she was a pushover, like her mother. Who knew what men like that thought.

The cop who pulled me over for speeding turned on the siren when I

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didn't come screeching to a halt. He was frowning deeply, I saw in the rearview mirror, as he approached the car.

"My mother's dying," I said.

"License and registration," he said, looking at me with those reflective sunglasses cops love so much. I could see a little tiny me, like a smudge on the lens. I had been speeding, overcome with worry. After all, it was a terrible situation. The easiest way to express it had been to say that my mother was dying. Replace "lost her mind" with "dying."

"Mustang convertible," the cop said. "Funny car to rent if your mother's dying."

"I used to have a Mustang," I said, choking back tears. I was telling the truth, too. When I moved from Vermont, I'd left it behind in a friend's barn, and over the winter the roof had fallen in. There was extensive damage, though the frame had rusted out anyway. "My father bought it for me in 1968, as a bribe to stay in college."

The cop worked his lips until he came up with an entirely different expression. I saw myself reflected, wavering slightly. The cop touched his sunglasses. He snorted. "O.K.," he said, stepping back. "I'm going to give you a warning and let you go, urging you to respect your life and the life of others by *driving at the posted speed.*"

"Thank you," I said sincerely.

He touched the sunglasses again. Handed me the warning. How lucky I was. How very, very lucky.

It was not until he returned to his car and sped away that I looked at the piece of paper. He had not checked any of the boxes. Instead, he had written his phone number. Well, I thought, if I kill Drake, the number might come in handy.

I also played a little game of my own: replace "Richard Klingham" with "Jim Brown."

He was probably twenty-five years, maybe thirty years, younger than me. Which would be as reprehensible, almost, as Richard's picking up the teen-ager.

Back over the bridge, taking the first Venice exit, driving past the always closed House of Orchids, dismayed at the ever-lengthening strip mall.

My mother, again in the lawn chair, reading the newspaper, but now not bothering to look up as cars passed. I could remember her face vividly from years before, when my father and I had turned in to our driveway in Washington in an aqua Mustang convertible. She had been so shocked. Just shocked. She must have been thinking of the expense. Maybe also of the danger.

My mother seemed less timid now. Obviously, she, too, could be quite impulsive. I was just about to tap the horn when my mother stood and took a minute to steady herself before heading toward the house. Why was she bent over, walking so slowly? Had she been pretending to be spry earlier, or had I just not noticed? Then the door opened, and a man—it was Drake, that was who it was—stood on the threshold, extending a hand and waiting, not going down the steps, just waiting. He stood ramrod straight, but, even driving slowly, I got only a glimpse of him: this man who was not my father, with his big hand extended, and my mother lifting her hand like a lady ascending an elegant, carpeted staircase, instead of three concrete steps.

There was nothing I could say. It had all been decided. There was not a word I could say that would stop either one of them.

I turned left just before the street dead-ended, not wanting to risk passing by a second time. I realized that there was someone waiting to hear from me: possibly two people—the kid *and* the cop—if not three (my mother, who was probably hoping for an apology for my dire warnings about Drake). I could have made a phone call, had the evening go another way entirely, but everyone will understand why I decided otherwise.

You can't help understanding. First, because it is the truth, and, second, because everyone knows the way things change. They always do, even in a very short time. Back in Fort Myers, the transaction was all business: another shift was at work at the rental agency, and there was only the perfunctory question as I opened the door and got out about whether everything was all right with the car. ♦

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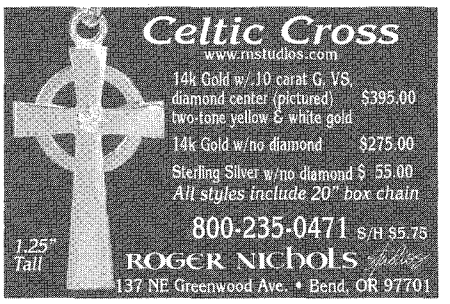

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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

HIDE-AND-SEEK

The complete Isaac Babel.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Isaac Babel was born in the Moldavanka, a poor, raffish district of Odessa, in 1894, and died, it has been established only within the last ten years, in Moscow's Lubyanka prison, early in the morning on January 27, 1940. He was shot by a firing squad after a twenty-minute trial held the day before in the private chambers of Lavrenti Beria, the notorious head of the K.G.B.'s predecessor, the N.K.V.D. Babel was convicted of "active participation in an anti-Soviet Trotskyite organization" and of "being a member of a terrorist conspiracy, as well as spying for the French and Austrian governments." He had confessed, during the previous eight months of imprisonment and interrogation, to charges of espionage, but his last recorded statement protested, "I am innocent. I have never been a spy. I never allowed any action against the Soviet Union. . . . I am asking for only one thing—let me finish my work."

This miserable end befell a writer whom Maxim Gorky had described to André Malraux in 1926 as "the best Russia has to offer." A quarter of a century later, Babel's contemporary Konstantin Paustovsky wrote in his reminiscences, "He was, for us, the first really Soviet writer." Babel was a Jew who embraced the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 as a deliverance from the anti-Semitic restrictions and sanctioned pogroms of the tsarist regime; to an extent, he embraced the violence of the era in which he came to manhood. His terse, polished short stories make heroes of the Moldavanka's murderous Jewish gangsters and of the brutal Cossacks with whom he rode as a war correspondent and Party propagandist during the Red Army's ill-fated invasion of Poland in the summer of 1920. His artistic star rose under the protection of Gorky, shone brightest with the collection "Red Cavalry," in 1926, and glimmered out as Stalin's rule, beginning in 1924, with Lenin's death, suffocated freedom of expression and imposed terror. Babel and the poet Osip Mandelstam, who died in 1938 in a concentration camp, were Stalin's most distinguished literary victims.

Ilya Ehrenburg, a fellow-Jew and a journalist with survival skills superior to the provocative Babel's, first mentions his old friend in his memoirs in a passage on games that writers play: "Isaak Babel used to hide from everybody, not because people would disturb his work but because he loved the game of hide-and-seek." Babel was, indeed, a man of many habitations, many styles, several pseudonyms, eight or so languages; he had three children by three different women, and for many years kept his common-law household in Moscow a secret from his legal wife, whom he married in 1919 and who lived in France from 1925 on. The daughter of that marriage, Nathalie, born in 1929, survived with her mother in Occupied France and eventually emigrated to the United States in 1961, four years after her mother died. A varied academic career brought Nathalie Babel around, through English and French and Latin-American literature, to Slavic studies and the work of her elusive father, whom she met as a small child during two visits he made to Paris in the nineteen-thirties. In the nineteen-sixties, she edited a book of his letters and a book of lesser-known short stories; early in that decade, she had met her Russian half sister, Lidya, and Lidya's mother, Antonina, an impressive woman who had been the first construction engineer of her sex to work on the Moscow subway system, and who at the age of eighty co-edited the most nearly complete edition, in two volumes, of Babel's works in Russian. Now Nathalie Babel, at the age of seventy-two, has edited a still fuller edition, translated into English by Peter Constantine: "The Complete Works of Isaac Babel" (Norton; $39.95). His œuvre—stories, journals, journalistic reports, suppressed plays, film scripts produced and unproduced—can no longer play hide-and-seek; it is gathered here, a thousand pages strong.

The son of a dealer in agricultural machinery, Babel was well educated as a child, studying English, French, and German. The stories of Maupassant especially impressed him; his own first stories were written in literary French. His first published story, "Old Shloyme," written in Russian, appeared when he was eighteen and concerned the controversial matter of coerced Christian conversions under tsarist laws: its eighty-six-year-old hero commits suicide rather than change his religion to avoid eviction. Babel wrote about Jews with a brisk, at times scornful knowingness; he seemed prouder of being an Odessan, a child of this southerly Black Sea port equipped, the sketch "Odessa" tells us, with "sweet and oppressive spring evenings, the spicy aroma of acacias, and a moon filled with an unwavering, irresistible light shining over a dark sea." It is, he affirms, "the only Russian town where there is a good chance that our very own, sorely needed, homegrown Maupassant might be born." He asks, "If you think about it, doesn't it strike you that in Russian literature there haven't been so far any real, clear, cheerful descriptions of the sun?" His youthful stories supply this lack: "The sun hung from the sky

KOREN, 7/25/1983

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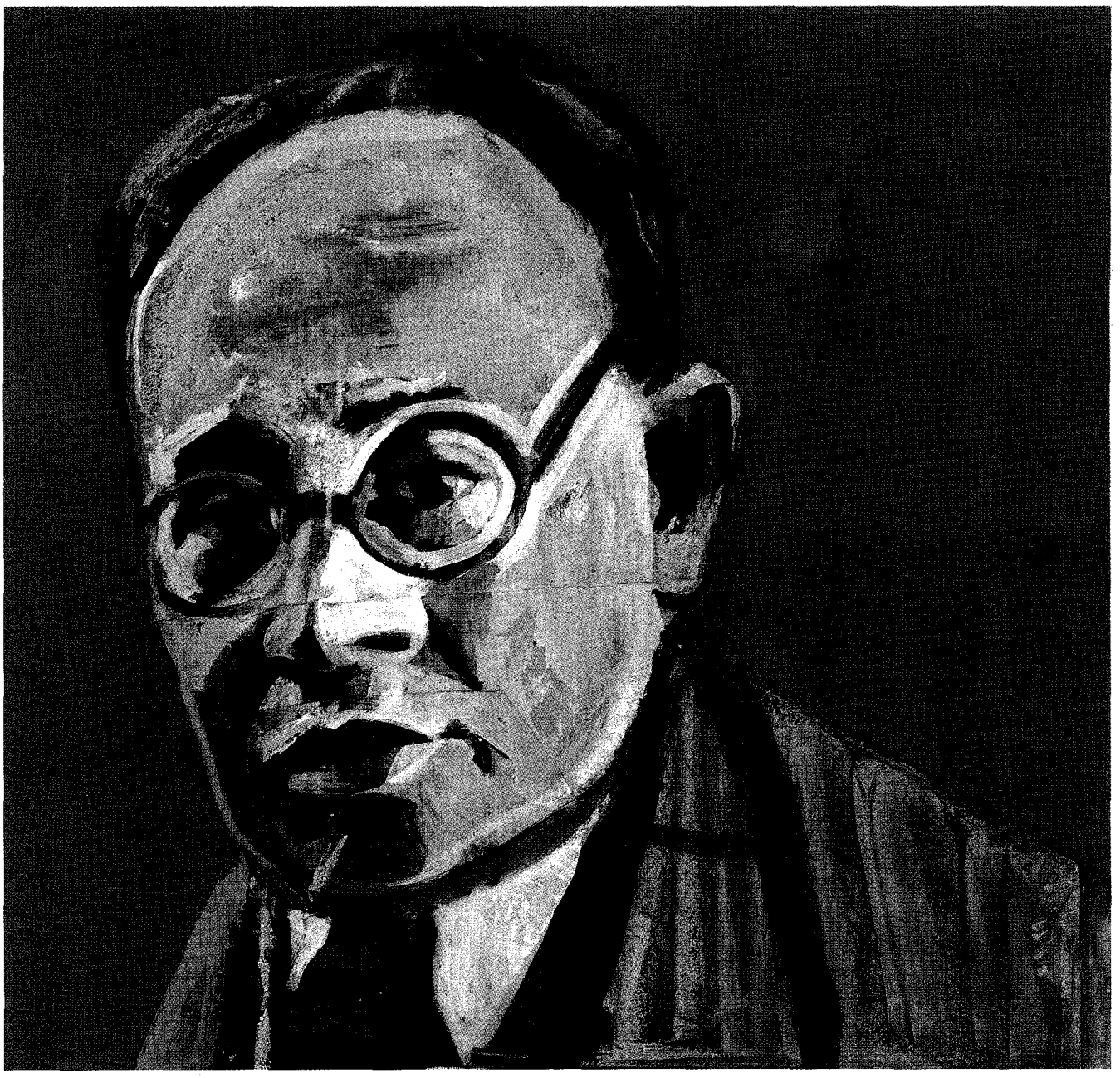

"Your language becomes clear and strong not when you can no longer add but when you can no longer take away," Babel said.

ANDREA VENTURA

like the pink tongue of a thirsty dog" ("Lyubka the Cossack"); "The sun . . . poured into the clouds like the blood of a gouged boar" and "The sun soared up into the sky and spun like a red bowl on the tip of a spear" ("Sunset"); "The orange sun is rolling across the sky like a severed head" ("Crossing the River Zbrucz").

The violence of these metaphors owes something to the Russian Symbolists, Aleksandr Blok and Andrei Bely foremost, whose poetry and prose place Russian under a pressure of extravagance that English, since the age of Shakespeare, has rarely been asked (unless by Gerard Manley Hopkins and Hart Crane) to bear. Babel's far-fetched tropes, in Peter Constantine's hardworking translation, explode off the page: "The stars scattered in front of the window like urinating soldiers" and "The velvet tablecloths knocked his eyes right off their feet" ("Sunset"); "I sat to the side, dozed, dreams pouncing around me like kittens" ("Italian Sun"); "A sour odor rose from the ground, as from a soldier's wife at dawn" ("Sashka Christ"); "The skies above me open up like a many-buttoned concertina" ("The Life of Matvey Rodionovich Pavlichenko"); "The silence of the sunset turned the grass around the castle blue. The moon rose green as a lizard above the pond" ("Berestechko"). In the relatively few stories written after those of "Red Cavalry," many of them in a voice of boyhood reminiscence, the Symbolist skyrockets are fewer, though there are flares like "Caught between these two men, I watched the hoops of other people's happiness roll past me" ("Di Grasso") and this burst of imagery: "The night was lilac and heavy, like a bright mountain crystal. Veins of frozen rivulets lay across it. A star sank into a well of black clouds" ("Kolyvushka"). The solitary star is a frequent image in Babel, and his artistic pilgrimage feels like a lonely one, in an increasingly cold climate. The stories in "Red Cavalry"—so close to the jour-

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nalism he was simultaneously producing—incautiously named a number of commanders, not always in a flattering context, and two of them, Semyon Budyonny and Kliment Voroshilov, rose in Stalin's hierarchy. In 1928, a Soviet critic chastised Babel for his low production, his "silence," but, travelling in 1929-30, "in search of new material," he witnessed the brutal collectivization and famine in the Ukraine; there was so little he dared say. "Revolution indeed! It's disappeared!" he is reported to have confided to Yuri Annenkov, a Russian artist and Paris expatriate. "It's the Central Committees that are pushing forward—they'll be more effective. They don't need wheels—they have machine guns instead. All the rest is clear and needs no further commentary, as they say in polite society." Yet he passed up opportunities to stay in Paris. Rather than be a French taxi-driver, he always returned to the straitened and perilous vocation of a writer in Russia.

Paustovsky's memoir illuminates Babel's aesthetic: "Writers, he said, should write in Kipling's iron-clad prose; authors should have the clearest possible notion of what was to come out of their pens. A short story must have the precision of a military communiqué or a bank check." He describes him at work:

> Babel would go up to his desk and stroke his manuscript cautiously as though it were a wild creature which had still not been properly domesticated. Often he would get up during the night and reread three or four pages by the light of an oil lamp. . . . He would always find a few unnecessary words and throw them out with malicious glee. He used to say, "Your language becomes clear and strong, not when you can no longer add a sentence, but when you can no longer take away from it."

One thinks of Hemingway in Paris, honing language to a fresh starkness, and Hemingway had read Babel, as he stated in a 1936 letter to Ivan Kashkin: "Babel I know ever since his first stories were translated in French and the Red Cavalry came out. I like his writing very much." But Hemingway included no Babel in his thousand-page anthology, "Men at War" (1942). "Red Cavalry" contains little war in the sense of clearly delineated military encounters; it is not even very clear that the Poles defeated the invasion of the Red Army, including the Cossack cavalry. One of Babel's political offenses with the book was, as an editorial headnote states, to give lasting publicity to this "disastrous campaign," the Bolshevik regime's rash "first venture at bringing Communism to the world." Another offense was to describe, with an inarguable terseness, the atrocities incidental to the military action—prisoners shot, women raped, children and elders slain and mutilated, churches and synagogues desecrated, even beehives torched.

Although the thirty-four stories in "Red Cavalry," some of them not much longer than the italic vignettes of war that Hemingway inserted in his collection "In Our Time," are told from several points of view, including that of a hardened soldier, the predominant impression is of a noncombatant's struggle to trail the military action while hungry, sleep-deprived, and billeted among Galician civilians as confused and helpless as he. Shtetls abounded in the border region of western Ukraine and eastern Poland, and the story cycle traces not only a bookish young Jew's attempt to learn war—to "fathom the soul of a fighter," to "understand life, to see what it actually is"—but Babel's homecoming, by way of witnessed Jewish suffering, to his own Jewishness. This progress, as well as the progress of the campaign, is more easily followed in a journal Babel kept in that summer of 1920 than in the stories, where the scattered viewpoints and the rigorous literary economy create a somewhat enigmatic and decontextualized effect, as of scenes lit by a fitful barrage. The journal has a constant, increasingly disillusioned hero, who gravitates toward the Jewish bystanders of this invasion: "Discussions with Jews, my people, they think I'm Russian, and my soul opens up to them." "An old Jew—I love talking with our people—they understand me." "I roam about the shtetl, there is pitiful, powerful, undying life inside the Jewish hovels." Of a synagogue: "Everything is white and plain to the point of asceticism, everything is incorporeal and bloodless to a monstrous degree, to grasp it fully you have to have the soul of a Jew. But what does this soul consist of? Is it not bound to be our century in which they will perish?" The Jews suffered looting and rapine alternately from Polish and Soviet armies. Babel takes note as he trots by: "A terrible, uncanny shtetl, Jews stand at their doors like corpses, I wonder about them: what more are you going to have to go through?" In the wake of a bloody Polish pogrom in the town of Komarow, Babel observes his own army "going around indifferently, looting where they can, ripping the clothes off the butchered people."

The so-called "Odessa stories," written and published in periodicals somewhat before the stories of "Red Cavalry," also trace disillusion with the Bolshevik revolution. Benya Krik, the dashingly

"Since we're both working on the same marriage, I thought it would be a good idea to get together and compare notes."

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ruthless crime boss at the center of the stories, in his confident heyday jests of the Jewish situation in Russia:

> Didn't God Himself make a mistake when he settled the Jews in Russia so they could be tormented as if they were in hell? Wouldn't it have been better to have the Jews living in Switzerland, where they would've been surrounded by first-class lakes, mountain air, and Frenchmen galore?

The attempt by these gangsters to make a congenial environment for themselves in Odessa, however, runs afoul of the new regime; when the Cheka arrests and executes the criminals, their patriarch, old one-eyed Froim Grach, goes to the chairman of the Cheka, a bureaucrat from Moscow named Vladislav Simen, and pleads, "You're killing off all the lions! And you know what you'll be left with if you keep it up? You'll be left with shit!" Simen offers Froim Grach cognac but arranges for him to be unceremoniously shot by two Red Army men, who afterward boast of how many bullets it took to kill him. When a native Odessan protests, telling Simen that he "can't understand what the old man represented," the out-of-towner asks, "What use would that man have been to the society we are building?" The answer reluctantly comes: "I suppose no use at all." Babel never published the story, "Froim Grach," in Russia; it first appeared in a New York Russian-language journal, in 1963.

The tale "How Things Were Done in Odessa" begins with an invitation: "Let's talk about Benya Krik. Let's talk about his lightning-quick beginning and his terrible end." But it was only in a screenplay for a silent movie entitled "Benya Krik" that Babel revealed the terrible end. The arch-criminal, who "got his way . . . because he was passionate, and passion holds sway over the universe," is double-crossed by the Red Army while hijacking a boxcar full of watermelons, and is shot from behind:

> The back of Benya's shaved neck. A spot appears on it, a gaping wound with blood spurting in all directions.
>
> FADEOUT

Babel's compressed, imagistic style and his taste for grotesquerie consort well with the genius of silent films. The five surviving scripts (three for silents, one for a talkie, and one a fragment of two scenes) conjure up a twitchy, fast-moving world of long shadows, raking lights, sinister freaks, and Eisensteinian close-ups. The script for the silent "Roaming Stars" begins:

> The edge of a double bed. Night. The broad back of old Ratkovich, the rich man of the shtetl. He is asleep. Somebody's bare arm slithers over his pillow. Old Ratkovich rolls over, and in his sleep traps the thief's hand, moves again, the hand frees itself, snatches a bundle of keys from under the pillow, and disappears.

Toward the end:

> Rogdai's hand clutching Kalnischker's false teeth. The bullet pierces the dead man's hand and the fingers unclench, dropping the false teeth. The hanging man's body turns its back to the viewer. Cut.

The alleged comedy among the screenplays, "The Chinese Mill (An Attempted Mobilization)," is a fairly inscrutable joke on misplaced Komsomol—Young Communist League—zeal, and the talkie, "Number 4 Staraya Square," also gingerly undertakes political satire; its heroine, a stalwart aeronautical engineer, may derive from Babel's common-law wife, the pioneering Antonina. The scripts and his two plays—"Sunset," performed at the Moscow Arts Theatre in 1928 but criticized for its ambivalent attitude toward the bourgeoisie and dropped from the theatre's repertoire, and "Maria," published in 1935 but cancelled during rehearsals, causing Babel's patron Gorky to decry its "Baudelairean predilection for rotting meat"—suggest that after "Red Cavalry" Babel was seeking coöperative art forms in which to hide or mute his fatal honesty. "I have no imagination," he told Paustovsky. "I can't invent. I have to know everything, down to the last vein, otherwise I can't write a thing. My motto is *authenticity*." His late short stories retreated to the relatively safe area of his boyhood in tsarist times, in Odessa and the town of Nikolayev. Some of these, like "The Story of My Dovecote," describing his grandfather's death in a pogrom, and "The Awakening," about his failure to become the violin prodigy that Jewish parents in Odessa hoped for, are among his best known. They are more accessible and more anthologizable than his aggressively gaudy earlier stories. Even so, the frankly sexual "My First Fee," recounting how the young author traded a spoken tale for sex with a prostitute, went unpublished. (Prostitution is a favorite theme, and Babel's Communism is nowhere more enthusiastic than in this diary entry on the women in the Red Army: "They gallop ahead with hitched-up skirts, dust-covered, fat-breasted, all of them whores, but comrades too, and whores because they are comrades, that's the most important thing, they serve in every way they can, these heroines.") A passing utterance from the heroine of "My First Fee" might serve as the motto for much of this body of proclamatory fiction and reportage: " 'The things men do,' Vera whispered, without turning around. 'My God, the things men do!' "

Cynthia Ozick, in an elegant introduction—offered along with a preface by Nathalie Babel and a foreword by the translator—makes the case that the time has come "to set Babel beside Kafka." Each "was an acutely conscious Jew," she says. "Each invented a type of literary modernism." The two of them "can be said to be the twentieth century's European coordinates." Both, she need hardly point out, died in their forties and left behind a fragmentary, truncated œuvre; they are wounded authors. But, for all Babel's unblinking witness and electric, heroically wrought prose, of which a final measure of music and slangy pungency must inevitably be left behind in the Russian, it is hard to feel him Kafka's equal. Kafka *could* invent, and the forces that oppressed him were enough interior to be converted into giant fables, comic representations of modern man's cosmic unease. Babel's oppressors were exterior—the philistine censors and paranoid enforcers of the increasingly totalitarian revolution he initially supported and, to the end, sought to accommodate. But no imaginative conversion, and not even silence, once his talent had announced itself, could evade or placate them. Babel's art flourished in Lenin's false dawn. As darkness fell, he became his talent's warder; his vitality became his enemy. ♦

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BOOKS

METROPOLITAN LIVES

It happened at the opera.

BY ALEX ROSS

Kathleen Battle was a jewel-voiced soprano who started out singing in churches in Ohio and ended up as a global diva of the touch-me-not variety. She verbally abused wardrobe mistresses, overruled specialist conductors on Baroque technique, and, on one notorious occasion, called her manager from the back of a limo in order to have a message delivered to the driver in the front. In 1994, after a horrific rehearsal for "La Fille du Régiment," Joseph Volpe, the general manager of the Metropolitan Opera, decided to subject Battle to a public humiliation. He announced that the star was leaving the production, and, dropping the usual euphemisms about "artistic differences," singled out her "unprofessional actions." Battle was, in effect, fired, and she has sung very little opera since.

The mainstream press, which on a normal day covers classical music about as assiduously as it covers multivariable calculus, decided to make a national story out of this episode. "Nightline," on ABC, devoted a show to the international crisis of opera singers run amok. "They drive you nuts," Ted Koppel said. "They're pampered, they're spoiled, they always have to be the center of attraction." Chasing the perfect nutty-diva anecdote, Koppel overlooked the real news value of the incident—that Volpe was asserting authority over the Met's longtime artistic director, James Levine, who had indulged Battle in the past. But who cares about the Met as an institution? The story took off because it fulfilled the stereotype of opera as a nest of screaming ninnies. This, editors seemed to think, is how the art should be explained to the masses. The funny thing is, some of the masses actually take opera seriously. Sixteen and a half million people in North America attend opera performances each year.

Johanna Fiedler's "Molto Agitato: The Mayhem Behind the Music at the Metropolitan Opera" (Doubleday; $30) will appeal to anyone who thinks of opera as a diva circus. The title is an ambitious one, promising Led Zeppelin levels of backstage hysteria. But does it promise too much? Fiedler was at one time the company's press representative, and she succeeds in exposing all the dirty linen that she used to work hard to conceal: the affairs, the squabbles, the nasty memos. Battle gets a chapter to herself. Still, this agitato is more mezzo than molto. The Met is, if anything, a little too calm, a little too cautious. It just sits there, boringly magnificent, secure in its reputation as the best-run opera house in the world. English music critics, who know from mayhem, are always citing it as a model of artistic sanity. Sometimes you wish there were a few more Battles to shake things up.

"Molto Agitato" concentrates on the period from 1970 to the present, and deals only briefly with the legends of seasons past, such as Mahler, Toscanini, Caruso, and Callas. All the same, its principal cast is a fascinating one. You have Joe Volpe, barking at shiftless singers and whipping the house into financial shape; Bruce Crawford, a former éminence grise, who served only white wine and Perrier in his office so there would be no stains; Franco Zeffirelli, who is observed paying less attention to singers than to the adorable animals that he invariably causes to be led onstage. You have labor disputes, swooning fits, Lincoln Center turf wars. You even have a string of Agatha Christie deaths: a violinist murdered by a stagehand; a melancholy fan falling from the Family Circle; a veteran singer suffering a fatal heart attack after delivering the line "You can only live so long." And in the middle you have the affable, untouchable Levine.

All these people have tried to fill the vacuum created by Rudolf Bing, who ruled the Met in autocratic style in the fifties and sixties. In the old days, there were almost too many stars; Bing's most famous act was to fire Callas. In the seventies, with the ranks of the stars dwindling, the Met went into the red, and for a while it seemed to be on the edge of collapse. John Dexter, one of the "Angry Young Men" of English theatre, came along to propose a solution: the house should concentrate on bold, spare productions that favored singing actors over vocal virtuosos. For a time, Dexter's approach was humored, and his productions of "Billy Budd," "Lulu," and "Dialogues of the Carmelites" gave the Met an intellectual cachet that it had possessed only in Bing's early years. But, in the eighties, the social lions on the governing board asserted themselves, and they wanted more monster spectacles in the Zeffirelli line. Only when Volpe, a hard-knuckle politician experienced in the technical side of opera, took the helm in 1990 did the house seem to pull together and show flashes of the old excitement.

So there is maneuvering behind the music. But mayhem? Fiedler strains to give her narrative a melodramatic drive: too many chapters end with a sentence like "And Madame X never sang at the house again." Maybe she was just ready to retire. In the same way, Fiedler attempts to give a Battle-esque, demonic tinge to other singers on the Met's roster, coming down especially hard on Plácido Domingo, who seems to have driven her crazy during her tenure in the press office. "His thirst for attention and reassurance has somehow compromised his copious gifts," she writes. This may speak for opera professionals, but it hardly speaks for the Met's audience, which is not exactly held "at arm's length," as she says, by Domingo's performances. His current portrayal of Idomeneo is a case in point; every aspect of it is mesmerizing, even if certain notes and phrases are improvised on the spur of the moment. Domingo has something of Marlon Brando's old ability to create the illusion of reality while looking for the next cue card. Whatever goes on behind the scenes is beside the point.

Fiedler does better with Levine, for whom she seems to hold a perplexed affection. The Met's artistic director is a

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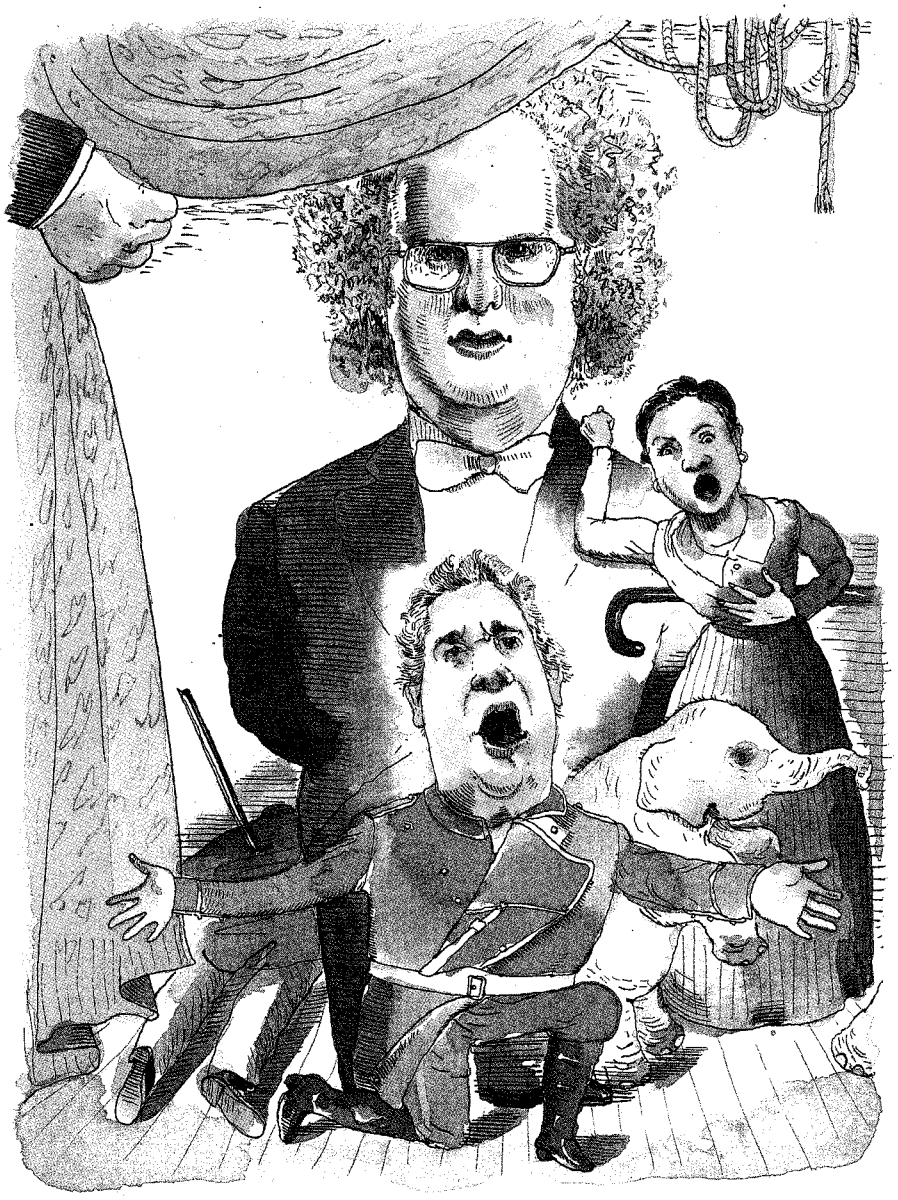
hard man to figure out, as any music journalist can attest. He talks a mile a minute, waxes enthusiastic about myriad possibilities, and avoids saying anything definitive. Fiedler gets closer than most: she suggests that Levine's almost airheaded friendliness is a defense mechanism, hiding a hard intellect and a steely will. She quotes a colleague as saying, "Beware the three F's—you're fantastic, you're fabulous, you're fired." Nonetheless, Levine is a sublime conductor—one of the few living maestros who carry with them an identity in sound. Any score is capable of becoming Levineland, a place of muscular warmth. Some say that he goes too far in smoothing the edges of the music, but on his best nights he bestows a dreamlike halo of perfection. A couple of his performances of "Lulu" last spring reached the zenith of what music can accomplish—they left you energized, alert, dizzy with ideas.

Opera buffs who read the book will flip immediately to the section described in the index under "Levine, James . . . persistent rumors surrounding." Curious stories have followed the conductor from the beginning of his career. "There was malicious gossip, rumors of orgies, and homosexuality, and chamber music played in the nude," Fiedler writes. That's in ascending order of horror, presumably. Later on, the rumors became more vicious. Fiedler, who ought to know, systematically dismantles them. They belong in the category of personalized urban legends that attach themselves to certain celebrities for no discernible reason. Creepier than the rumors themselves is the delight with which people in the music world have repeated them. Some have done so out of professional envy, some out of sheer malice. Levine has denied the rumors, but his most effective response has been his performances, which make all the gossip sound bitter and small.



BARRY BLITT

A house of impossible divas, demanding tenors, untouchable maestros, untimely deaths.

Randall Jarrell once said, "The people who live in a Golden Age usually go around complaining how yellow everything looks." Likewise, even the Met's most exalted achievements are subject to relentless rounds of second-guessing. Fiascos stay in the memory for decades; successes are merely exceptions that prove the rule. Surprisingly few people are willing to admit that they love the Met. The other day, I was talking to a composer who had gone to see "Idomeneo" and had come away astonished by the brilliance of the singing and playing. "*This* is civilization," he said. You don't hear such comments often at intermission. Fans are critics by nature, and they gush only when they can be sure of gushing first or loudest.

The Met is a minor empire, a banana republic, with its own court of insiders and a vast shadow government of fault-finding fans. Professional critics cannot compete with the withering intensity of the samizdat screeds that now appear on the Internet and in the magazine *Parterre Box*. The latter bills itself as a "queer opera zine"; it balances the expected diva worship with merciless behind-the-scenes reporting, next to which "Molto Agitato" is timid stuff. Here is an overview of the administration of Joseph Volpe, which appeared under the byline Dawn Fatale:

> No one will deny Mr. Volpe his negotiating skills, his tenacity, or his admirable willingness to be accountable for decisions he has made. At the same time, however, his insistence on financial prudence above all else is wounding the Met, leaving it an admittedly solvent company that has abandoned its artistic mission. It is now guided by considerations such as how little it can get away with investing in new productions before the patrons revolt; what operas are cast-proof and can be cast accordingly; how little need be invested in audience expansion and innovative marketing; and which singers can be abused but will sing here whenever asked. . . . He will be best remembered

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as the manager who alienated performers, producers, and audiences, leaving the Met with a full wallet and a barren soul.

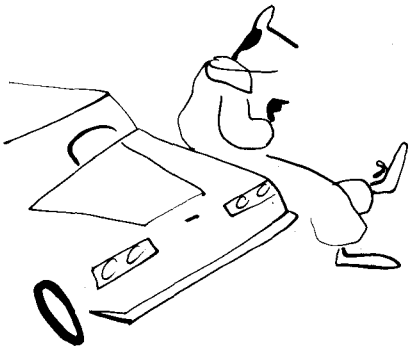
This attack goes ridiculously over the top, holding the Met to an impossible ideal; but it has some significant points to make. The blunt truth is that the house exists on two quite separate planes, the Levine and the Mundane. Levine's pet projects are done in de-luxe style; the conjunction of his artistic focus and Volpe's administrative will power makes for many brilliant evenings of theatre each season. When Levine is absent, however, standards can plummet. The casting is often mysterious, with mediocrities becoming fixtures in the house and noted singers never getting the time of day. Volpe's attempts at European concept production routinely flop. And all kinds of shady characters show up on the podium. Some of the Italian repertory, for example, has been handed over to Carlo Rizzi, who has no feeling for Italian style. Rizzi's recent "Norma," with a flailing Jane Eaglen, was what Dawn Fatale would call a bumpy night.

During the interregnum of the early seventies, the Met had the idea of bringing in Maria Callas as general manager. The genius singer of the century said no, leaving behind a tantalizing what-if scenario. Now, with Volpe making noises about retiring in the not too distant future, Domingo is being mentioned as a possible successor. Whatever the merits of that rumor, the thought of having a singer in charge at the Met is intrinsically appealing. The chief irritation of opera life today is the power that has accrued to directors; singers have to wear Scooby-Doo outfits if that is the whim. In part, singers have lost their power because they no longer possess the instantly arresting vocal charisma of the likes of Milanov and Martinelli. But that doesn't mean opera has to become performance art. The Met's younger stars, such as Karita Mattila, Bryn Terfel, René Pape, and Susan Graham, are physical and vocal presences in equal measure; what they need is not arid conceptualism but gritty realism—a style of staging that respects a composer's intentions without embalming them in prettiness. We may again see a time when the Met's stage becomes a simple, sturdy platform for singing actors. On the best nights, it already is. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Fred and Edie, *by Jill Dawson (Welcome Rain; $25)*. In 1922, Edith Thompson, a millinery clerk, and Frederick Bywaters, who worked in a ship's laundry, were arraigned in the Old Bailey for the stabbing death of Edie's loutish husband, Percy—he as the perpetrator and she as co-conspirator. The case was sensational, involving not only adultery and incriminating letters but also a double betrayal (Freddy was the boyfriend of Edie's sister Avis). Many believed that Edie was innocent, indicted on moral but not criminal grounds. Piecing together contemporary news accounts and the gist of Edie's notes to Freddy from Holloway Gaol, Dawson has fashioned an epistolary novel marked by an almost unfaltering grasp of period atmosphere—the trolley ride, the felt cloche—and a consummate knowledge of erotic obsession.

Roosevelt's Secret War: F.D.R. and World War II Espionage, *by Joseph E. Persico (Random House; $35)*. Americans responded to the attack on Pearl Harbor with anger, sorrow, and the recognition that the enemy's success represented a failure of American intelligence. Persico tells us that Roosevelt had always been fascinated by espionage, and in the wake of the bombing he encouraged the proliferation of covert operations. Some agents engaged in feats of derring-do, others made cunning use of public records, and—in keeping with the labyrinthine propensities for which the Roosevelt Administration was famous—a few missions were so secret that the operatives answered directly to the President. Persico's stories document fumbles and false alarms as well as triumphs, and Roosevelt's bureaucracies precipitated vicious turf wars. His diversity of approaches, however, also greatly enhanced our intelligence capacity.



I, Maya Plisetskaya, *by Maya Plisetskaya, translated from the Russian by Antonia W. Bouis (Yale; $35)*. In 1937, when the Bolshoi's acclaimed spitfire ballerina was eleven, the K.G.B. came at dawn to arrest her father ("My mother, unkempt, pregnant with a big belly, weeping and clutching. . . . My father, white as snow, dressing with trembling hands"). They shot him, and sent his wife to a prison camp. Such events were common under Stalin. What is new in this memoir is the description of the death-by-inches humiliation of life in the Soviet theatres: the dancers informing on each other in order to get a little something (a role, a place on the tour list); the dog food these supposedly glamorous Russian artists ate in their American hotel rooms in order to eke out their per diems; and, at every turn, some apparatchik, violent and fearful, blocking one's way. The book is bitter and shrieky, but no more than is just.

Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere, *by Jan Morris (Simon & Schuster; $23)*. What gives a city its character? What is the quality of its attractions? A century ago, Trieste was the major port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; now it is attempting to remake itself as a vibrant center of science and tourism in northern Italy. But in her forty-fifth—and, she claims, last—book Morris fondly describes Trieste as "the capital of nowhere," arguing that the city's very name connotes "the visceral, the surreal, the lonely, the hypochondriac, the self-centred and the affectionate." The noted Welsh travel writer and transsexual, who first visited Trieste as a young soldier in 1946 and last as an elderly woman, plumbs the mysteries of the city's melancholy, and the result is a meditation on the locus of the self and its confabulation of psychic history and accidents of geography.

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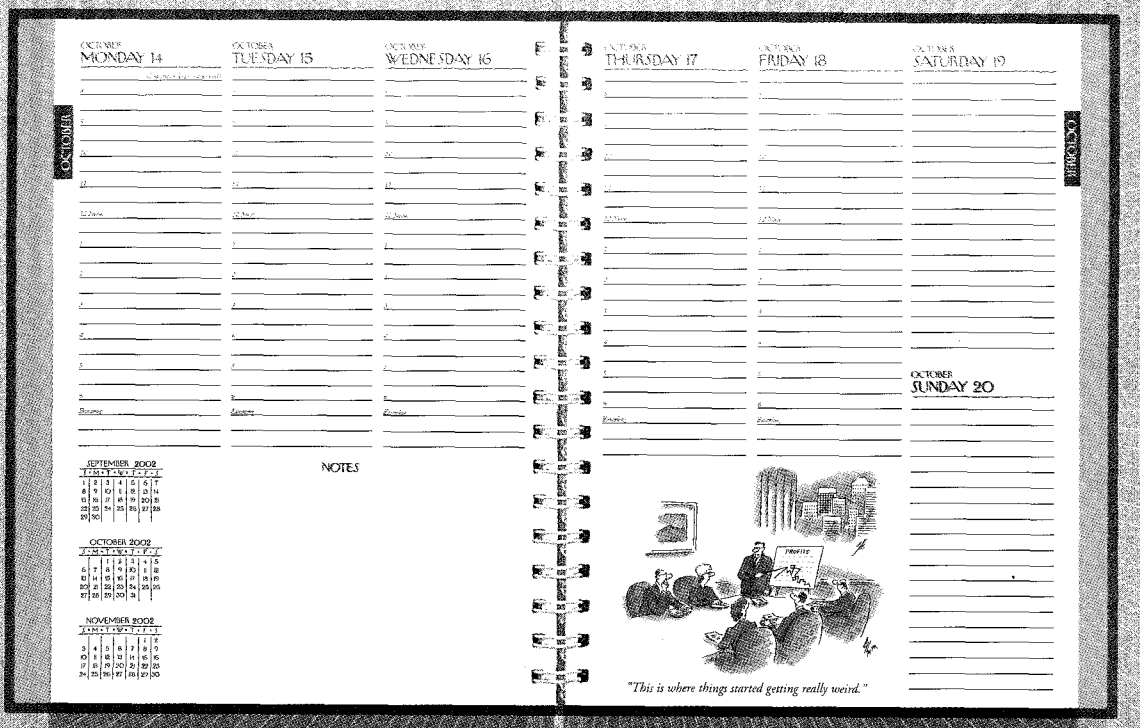

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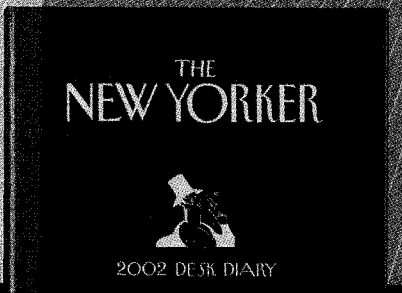

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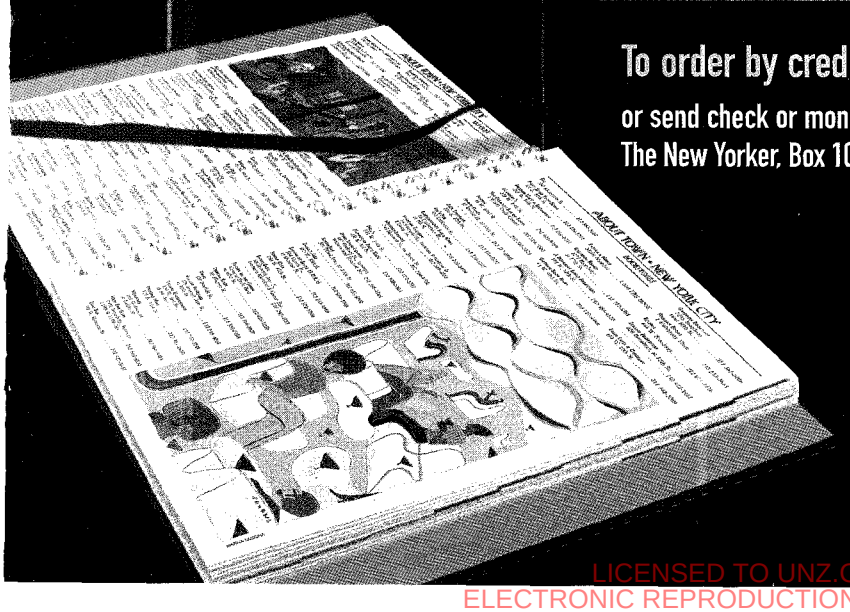

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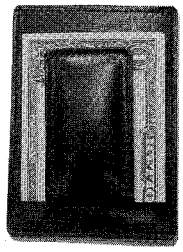

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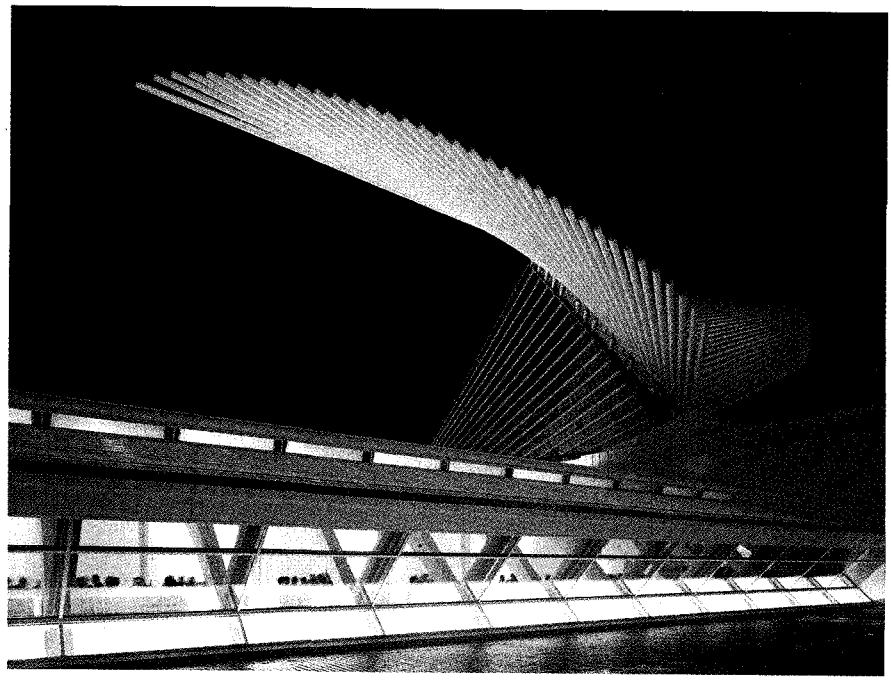
THE SKY LINE

ART HOUSES

New museums in Milwaukee and St. Louis.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

The new Quadracci Pavilion at the Milwaukee Art Museum does not so much resolve the struggle between art and architecture as dodge it. Santiago Calatrava, the Spanish architect-engineer who is known for some of the most beautiful bridges of our time, has designed a spectacular building that has nothing to do with the display of art and everything to do with getting crowds to come to the museum. The main part of this seventy-five-million-dollar building, technically an addition to the museum's older sections, which were designed by Eero Saarinen and David Kahler, is a huge, flamboyant structure of metal and glass that looks like an enormous bird, or a white version of Picasso's famous sculpture in downtown Chicago, blown up to monumental scale. It has masts, cables, a two-hundred-and-fifty-foot-long suspended pedestrian bridge, and, as its coup de théâtre, a pair of movable wings made of metal louvres that form a gigantic brise-soleil, or architectural sunscreen. The only art in this portion of Calatrava's building is a Calder mobile near the front door. The big attraction is the brise-soleil, which opens to a wingspan of two hundred feet. The wings flap on schedule, like the eruptions of Old Faithful. Watching the brise-soleil open and close is a lot more fun than seeing one of those lumbering stadium roofs retract. The building is exquisitely light, and it seems almost to lift off the ground.



The winglike brise-soleil, above a promenade, at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Most of the museum's art collection is housed in renovated galleries in the old buildings, a couple of hundred feet away. But one now enters the museum through the Quadracci Pavilion, which has a ninety-foot-high interior space, a kind of glass-and-steel tent, that the museum calls its reception hall. Tying this to the older galleries is a long, low section, also by Calatrava, that contains a large gallery for temporary exhibitions flanked by a pair of

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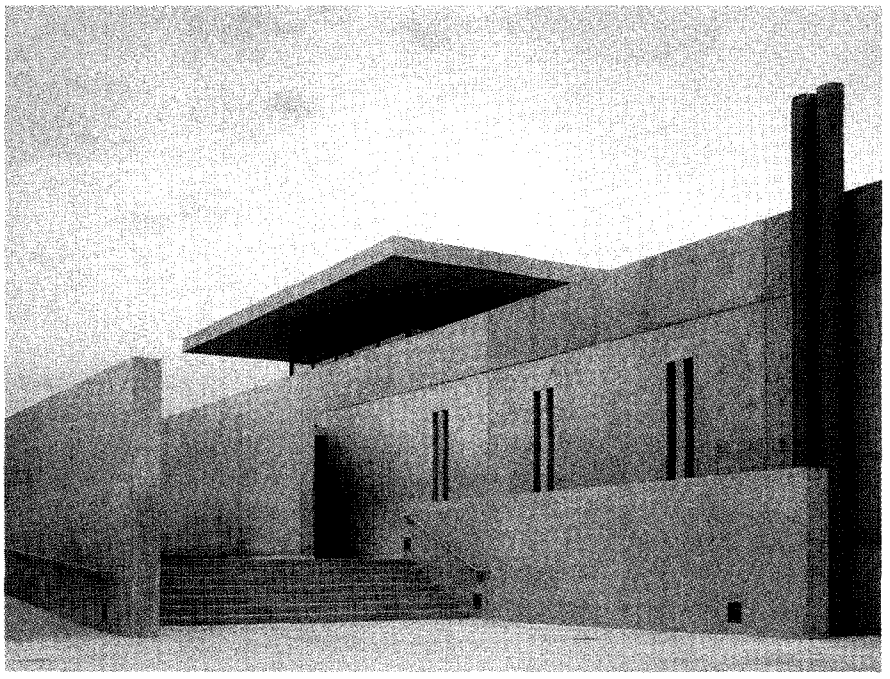
windowed promenades, one of which looks out over Lake Michigan. Calatrava's gallery is both handsome and flexible, but no one is ever going to mistake it for the main event. It can't compete with the reception hall and its brise-soleil, which—judging from the numbers of people who visited on the opening weekend, last month—has made Milwaukee feel rather good about itself.

Calatrava has neutralized the dilemma that has been at the center of museum design for more than a generation. Ever since Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Guggenheim in New York, architects have been accused, sometimes rightly, of making museums in which architectural excitement is more important than showing art to its best advantage. Many of the new museums have been great buildings, and wildly popular. They prove not only that you don't need to show art in a plain, neutral box but also that people are often more eager to see a thrilling container than what is contained in it. But no one, not even Frank Gehry in the Guggenheim in Bilbao, has been able to erase the tension between the desire of architects for self-expression and the desire of curators for simple spaces that don't compete with art.

Calatrava's solution is deft, to say the least. By putting the art—or that small amount of art that his building is expected to contain—in a low, matter-of-fact connecting structure that clearly defers both to the flashier part of his own new design and to the museum's original complex, Calatrava was able to provide plain-vanilla galleries and an icon at the same time. It's not all that different from what, say, I. M. Pei did more than twenty years ago in the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, where a splashy space wows crowds and, meanwhile, the art is tucked into ordinary galleries off to the side. Calatrava is just more honest about it.

It is logical, and also morally comfortable, to believe that, since art is the art museum's reason for being, the spaces that house it should be the most important ones in a building. Art uplifts, and, if the art museum is designed as a temple to art, it uplifts, too. But for at least two decades the art museum has functioned less like a temple than like an agora. So what if Calatrava's building feels a little like the Guggenheim rotunda without the spiral, or the Great Hall of the Metropolitan Museum without the galleries? It is a kind of urban event, and one of the most pleasing exercises in structural exhibitionism in a long time. Since the main part of the building barely engages with art, it need not be compared with recent museums by architects such as Gehry, Renzo Piano, and Peter Zumthor. It's an extravaganza that says something about the exhilaration of well-crafted structures, and about the ennobling potential of public places.



The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, in St. Louis. Photographs by Todd Eberle.

This is Calatrava's first building in the United States, and it bears some resemblance to American architecture that he admires, particularly Eero Saarinen's T.W.A. Terminal at Kennedy Airport. The interior of the reception hall is an homage to that building, with the same swooping space, but it is lighter and more graceful. Calatrava is a lyricist. His architecture soars, and it celebrates light, transparency, and soft, sensuous curves. All of Calatrava's structures are tensile, and even the ones that don't literally move, as this one does, suggest movement in their forms.

Calatrava is so adroit a designer that he has even managed to make something lovely out of the museum's basement parking garage, which has a few swoops and curves of its own. The entrance to the garage is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax headquarters, thirty miles south of Milwaukee, in Racine, and the huge, arching trusses recall Antonio Gaudí, with whom Calatrava has often been compared. The hundred-car underground garage even has natural light, brought in via skylights along the perimeter. It's a shame to waste it as a place for parking cars, since it is about as good a space for the display of contemporary art as you could ask for.

Attracting the multitudes has become an entrenched priority for art museums, and it is hard to know what to make of a new institution that goes into business by announcing its intention to keep visitor counts low. The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, in St. Louis, opened its new building last month, and, so that the galleries won't feel too crowded, it plans to allow the public in only two days a week, and only by appointment. There is no café, and there is no gift shop. The New York *Times* reported that some people thought the place might be a bit too élitist to deserve its tax exemption.

I don't think Tadao Ando, the Jap-

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anese architect who designed the Pulitzer Foundation, and Emily Rauh Pulitzer, the collector who built it, would have known how to make a museum any other way, and they have created one of the finest small museums of our time. Ando's two-story concrete building is the greatest work of architecture to go up in St. Louis since 1891, when Louis Sullivan's Wainwright Building—the first skyscraper that can be called a fully resolved, mature work of art—opened. The Pulitzer Foundation and the Wainwright are both small, dense, and emotionally powerful buildings. Ando has thought through the idea of the small museum with the same freshness and honesty that Sullivan brought more than a century ago to the idea of the high-rise office building.

Where Sullivan is ornate, Ando is austere. But Ando, who won the Pritzker Prize in 1995, is not like most minimalists, and his work is not simple. His buildings, which are almost all of concrete, are subtle compositions of masses and planes that play against light and, often, against natural elements such as water and plantings. An Ando building is an object in the light, an object in the sun, an object in the wind. It is continually acted upon by nature. This is not the machine in the garden, to use the classic metaphor of early modernism and its relationship to nature.

Perhaps alone among the world's important architects, Ando is essentially self-taught. He was apprenticed to a carpenter in Japan, and he spent some time as a professional boxer, which may account for the intense physicality of his buildings. When you are in one of them, you have a sense of your body in an open space, or in an enclosure, or you feel that you are floating, or lifted up by light. The Pulitzer Foundation is Ando's first public building in the United States—he designed a private house in Chicago a few years ago, and a gallery at the Art Institute of Chicago—and it has already led to other commissions, including the Museum of Modern Art in Fort Worth, which is now under construction, and the Calder Museum in Philadelphia.

Emily Pulitzer and her husband, Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., the owner of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, approached Ando in 1991 and asked him to renovate an old industrial building in the midtown neighborhood of St. Louis to house their collection of contemporary art. The project stalled when Joe Pulitzer became ill, but after his death, in 1993, his widow went back to Ando and asked him to design an entirely new building for an adjacent site. The building is roughly U-shaped, with a reflecting pool between two parallel wings. One of the wings is two stories high and contains the main gallery, which is a hundred and seventy feet long; the other wing is one story high and has a glass-enclosed pavilion, a terrace, and a garden planted with pygmy bamboo on its roof. At the bottom of the U is an enclosed entry court, an interior vestibule, and a stair hall leading up to a mezzanine that opens to the roof garden.

The building is not large—the total gallery space is less than seven thousand square feet—but it is complex, and its over-all shape cannot be grasped easily from the outside. From some viewpoints, it seems to allude to Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion; from others, it could be an abstract version of Wright's Unity Temple, or just a concrete fortress. You don't get the layout instantly once you go in, either, but this doesn't seem to matter, since with Ando there is a joy in discovering space as it unfolds. He has created an extraordinary series of rooms, and you want to move through them slowly, since they are powerful spaces in themselves and, at the same time, remarkable exercises in the subtle relationships between art and architecture. One gallery, a twenty-three-foot cube, contains a pair of Rothkos and a dark Richard Serra on linen that wraps around a corner; the room at once forces you to focus inward and lifts you up, like Borromini. The main gallery, which contains three Roy Lichtensteins, two Andy Warhols, and a Philip Guston, among other works, has a six-foot-high band of windows along one side, running down to the floor and looking out to the reflecting pool; midway in this complex space, a monumental staircase descends to a lower level, turning the end of the gallery into a double-height space top-lit by a skylight. Under the skylight on that far wall, and anchoring the entire area, is "Blue Black," a twenty-eight-foot-high, two-panel work by Ellsworth Kelly that is one of two works of art that Emily Pulitzer commissioned for the building. The other is Richard Serra's torqued spiral, called "Joe" in honor of Joseph Pulitzer, which fills an outdoor courtyard. Both the Kelly and the Serra, like the building itself, inspire a literally physical mixture of joy and awe.

Ando's architecture is not easy or superficially entertaining. Yet it is deeply sensual. Architects have always struggled with ways to express the spiritual, and, of all architects alive today, I think Ando has come more consistently close to achieving a sense of spirituality in the spaces he makes, and in the walls he wraps around them. The walls of the Pulitzer Foundation are made of a poured-in-place concrete that is satiny smooth. The building is comparable to the work of Louis Kahn, but it seems more rigorous and less fussy than Kahn's. The only small museum in America worthy of comparison to the Pulitzer Foundation is Kahn's Kimbell, in Fort Worth, yet the Kimbell seems almost busy beside the Pulitzer.

Ando owes plenty to Kahn, of course, as he does to Le Corbusier. But there is a lot about his work that is utterly Japanese, particularly the way in which it seems to connect to the notion that one can, within a limited amount of space and with limited gestures, evoke a broader world. Ando's rooms, his spaces, are metaphors, the way a Japanese alcove full of precisely composed objects is a set of symbols. His work sometimes seems to resemble a classic Zen garden rather than other architecture. It is precise, and controlled, and it contains enormous compressed power. Ando boils things down to their core. His architecture is not plain, but richness distilled to its essence. ♦

From the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

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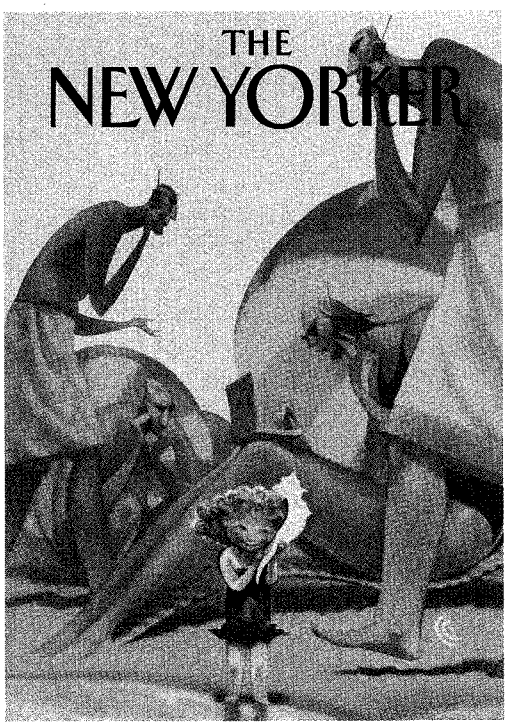

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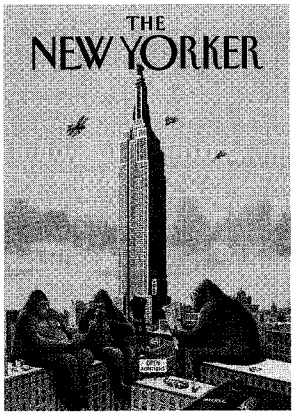

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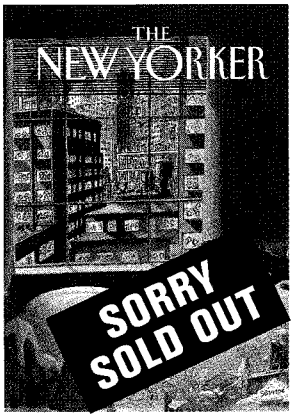

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THE THEATRE

MAKING A KILLING

Two musical ways of knocking 'em dead.

BY JOHN LAHR

Not long ago, at a dinner party, a Broadway lyricist whose international hit had earned him a chunk of Fort Knox confided to me the secret of his commercial success: "Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em wait," he said. In "Thou Shalt Not," an ambitious musical retelling of Émile Zola's psychological thriller "Thérèse Raquin," the authors—Susan Stroman, David Thompson, and Harry Connick, Jr.—seem to have taken the waiting game almost to the point of no return. What feels at first like firm ground quickly becomes a quagmire from which the show never quite extricates itself.

The central characters in Zola's cautionary tale of adultery and murder have passionate temperaments and are dominated, as Zola said, "by their nerves and blood." In its attempt to repaint them in 1947 New Orleans, "Thou Shalt Not" puts its vivid first stroke, it seems to me, in the wrong place. The curtain comes up on a raffish French Quarter jazz club, where the audience is introduced to the play's atmosphere of appetite and to a sex-starved former piano player named Laurent (the strapping and charismatic Craig Bierko), who has returned to the louche life after four years at war. "It's Good to Be Home"—a funky lick with Cajun flavors and the show's best lyric—certainly broadcasts Harry Connick, Jr.,'s musical gifts:

> They don't say what we say
> They don't play like we play
> They ain't got *étouffé*
> It's good to be home.

But it fails to properly dramatize Laurent. Instead of making his presence known at the piano, he is silent at a side table; only at the end of the extended opening number is he drawn into the narrative to recount his woeful tale—a flashback full of sound and fury told by a hunk and signifying much less than it should.

"Thou Shalt Not" 's problem is structural, and for that David Thompson, who wrote the musical's book, must take the rap. We don't reach the main location of the play—which happens to be another jazz club, called the Broken Tea Cup—until the third scene, after a balletic interlude in which Laurent glimpses Therese (Kate Levering) dancing alone with abandon. At the Broken Tea Cup, Mme. Raquin (the piquant Debra Monk) rules the roost. Her cosseted, tubercular son Camille (Norbert Leo Butz) plays the piano in the house band, and Therese, who waits tables there, turns out to be his dutiful wife. There's no reason that, with some tinkering, the details of Laurent's past and his discovery of Therese and her sexual neediness couldn't have been dramatized in Mme. Raquin's club. The single focus would have added to the sense of claustrophobia that feeds the lovers' unreasoning desire. Instead, by the time "Thou Shalt Not" finally begins to mesh, the pressure cooker of Zola's tale of sexual obsession has lost much of its steam.

Bierko, who has a strong, square jaw and a wink in his eye, exudes a palpable predatory musk. You really believe he has a sweet tooth for girls. Levering, on the other hand, dances well, but her acting, like her voice, lacks color. Nonetheless, the erotic charge between them is real enough. Stroman's choreography, otherwise pedestrian here, is best when orchestrating the hungry gymnastics of their first tumble on a revolving brass bed, which concludes with Levering briefly bare-breasted over Bierko's barrel chest.

"Thérèse Raquin" was Zola's first experiment in naturalism; "Thou Shalt Not" is an experiment in Expressionism. Stroman, who currently has four hits on Broadway and a fifth, "Oklahoma!," arriving in February, wants dance to be the narrative engine of the musical. But, although "Thou Shalt Not" has many incidental surface pleasures—including Thomas Lynch's expressive sets, Debra Monk on drums, a persuasive Mardi Gras number, and a chilling rowboat scene in which Camille, who cannot swim, is deep-sixed by Therese and Laurent—dance seems inadequate to the brooding psychology of Zola's lovers, whose needs are not so much dramatized as announced. For instance, as Laurent and Therese sniff around each other at the club, Therese steps out of the narrative to sing to us "I Need to Be in Love." It's a jarring shift of perspective that makes what should be a compelling revelation merely a static explanation.

Zola's terrific plot releases its characters and the audience into a world of violent unknowns that Stroman's production never really probes. The haunting of the two lovers by the ghost of Camille should demonstrate the complexity of their soullessness and their lacerating guilt; instead, it is trivialized by a strangely blithe spirit, who literally stands between Laurent and Therese and for the entire second act drives them apart. Camille's ghost is turned into a sort of Topper of terror, a lip-smacking avenging angel who watches the downfall of his murderers like a weedy Tom imagining having Jerry for dinner. "Thou Shalt Not" lacks the backbone of its title. The show never faces the moral horror of its origins, and it refuses to embrace Zola's notion that sexual pleasure leads to brutality and destruction. At final count, we have one drowning, one stroke, one gang bang, and two suicides in a show that concludes with a ghost swinging from a lamppost marked "Bourbon" and "St. Peter." What Zola imagined as the heart's wilderness Stroman and her team re-create as a theme park of self-destruction.

During the third encore of "Mamma Mia!," as the hardworking cast fired yet another ABBA golden oldie noisily out into the sixteen-hundred-seat Winter Garden Theatre, I turned to look up at the balcony. In the boxes, in the front rows, even in the crepuscular nosebleed section, people

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

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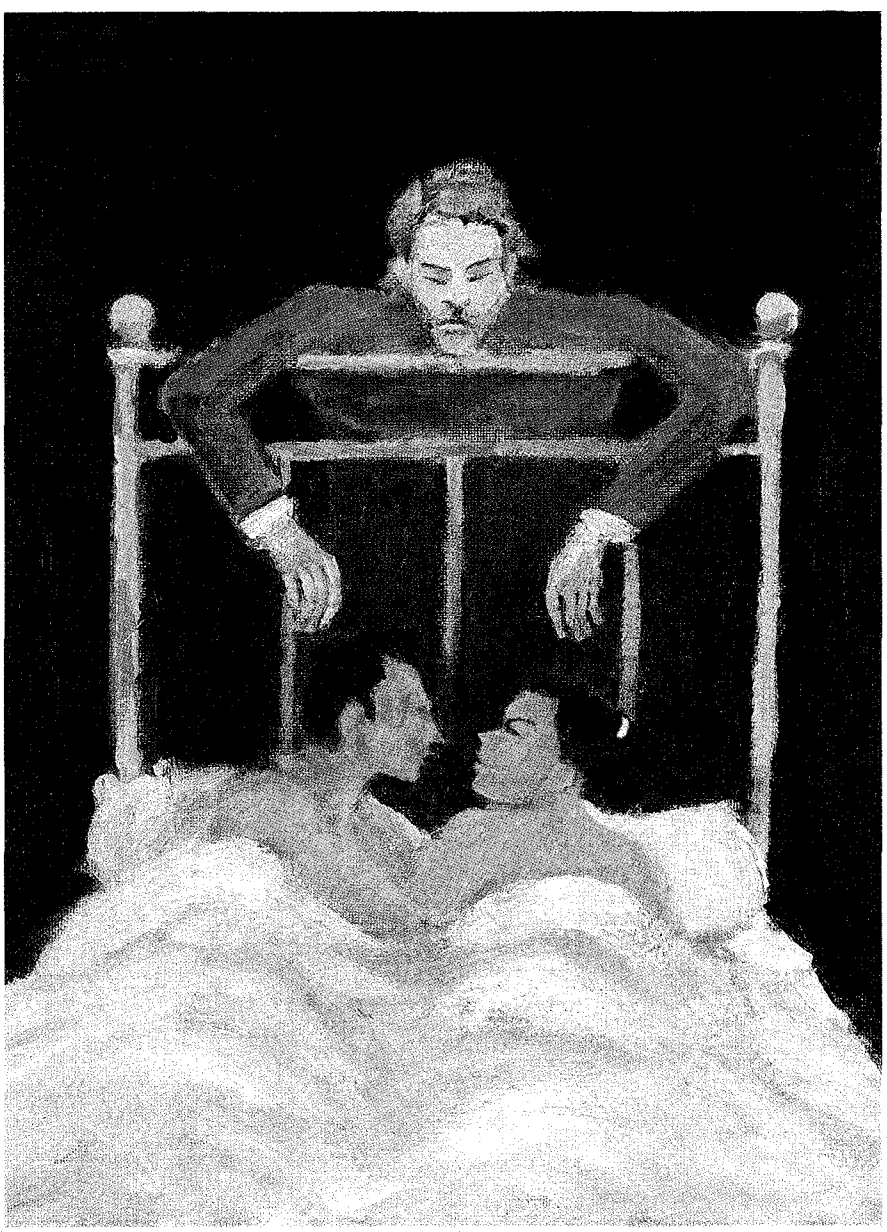
were standing, dancing, singing along. Amid this clamor, I was reminded of something that Winston Churchill was supposed to have said during the Second World War, when he was being pressed to move precious art works out of London: "God, no. What the hell have we been fighting for!" In dark times, art can raise the pulse and lift the heart of a community. Unfortunately, "Mamma Mia!" is nothing but hokum. Even though it's no small thing to bring fearful citizens together, to make them kick up their heels and feel silly and, for a moment, lighthearted again, there is no real workout for the spirit here.

This smorgasbord of song was the brainchild of Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, the male half of the seventies supergroup, which is second only to the Beatles at picking the pockets of Western civilization. Andersson and Ulvaeus have shrewdly allowed their platinum hits to be sent up by a story that pits the impudence of youth against the resilience of middle age. Catherine Johnson's book, which is simply a slick cartoon that connects the dots between ABBA's No. 1 singles, asks the question: Can twenty-year-old Sophie, the daughter of a hippie dropout who was the leader of a girl group called Donna and the Dynamos, find out which of the three men she's invited to her wedding is her real father? Though the show is cunningly directed by Phyllida Lloyd and given the proper vulgar acrylic touch by the designer Mark Thompson, the question—a multimillion-dollar McGuffin—remains unanswered.



In "Thou Shalt Not," Susan Stroman choreographs a ghostly ménage à trois.

Catastrophe has imposed on America a profound, unmooring sense of the unknown, and at this particular time we have to protect not just our external world but our internal one. This requires vigilance, an insistence on living with ambiguity, on thinking against received opinion, and mastering anxiety. Unlike some other media, which fan our fears, theatre has the capacity to build strength, by stage-managing them so that we can work through them. And this is really the sticking point of such chucklehead pleasures as "Mamma Mia!" and, for all its pretensions, "Thou Shalt Not," which are exercises in denial and therefore in false hope. When you're playing, you're thinking, but "Mamma Mia!," amplified to the screaming point and stripped of thought, character, narrative, and emotional nuance, is not about playing; it's about spectating. It asks nothing of the imagination except that it come to terms with the hundred-dollar top ticket price and the extra hundred and fifty that can be spent on a package of ABBA tchotchkes—T-shirt, cap, Teddy bear, key chain, puzzle, and CDs. "Mamma Mia!" is a kind of virtual entertainment, where the audience gets excitement without experience. The musical tries to excuse itself as a fairy tale. In "I Have a Dream," which begins and ends the show, it announces:

> If you see the wonder
> Of a fairy tale
> You can see the future
> Even if you fail.

This is Tin Pan Alley twaddle. In fairy tales, it's not the enchanted who are free but the disenchanted. Anodyne shows like "Mamma Mia!" will always make money; they just won't make a difference. ♦

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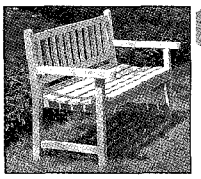

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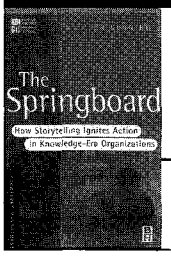

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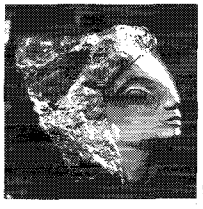

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

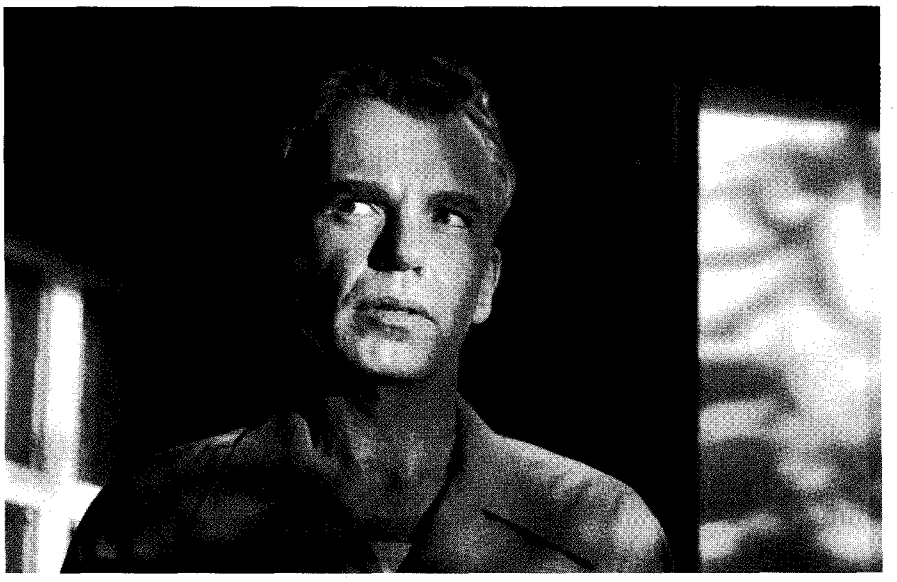
IN THE SHADOWS

Coen brothers crime, and a French phenomenon.

BY ANTHONY LANE

The success of "The Man Who Wasn't There," the latest concoction from the Coen brothers, rests on the question of whether or not you would notice Billy Bob Thornton if he walked past you in the street. I think we are all agreed that if he walked past in the company of his wife, better known as Angelina Jolie, there would be eyebrows raised, not least because, if the Thorntons' own accounts of the marriage are reliable, she would be busy sinking her famous fangs into his neck. For the Coens, however, Thornton has quietly assumed the role of Ed: a barber by trade, a smoker by choice, and a cuckold by virtue of his wife, Doris (Frances McDormand). He stabs a man to death, but, when he tries to confess, nobody pays attention, because the Eds of this world, and especially of Northern California in 1949, do not make natural killers.

The trouble with this conceit, of course, is that any hero worth his salt will, by definition, stand out so crisply from the crowd that all attempts to have him blend back in are bound to fail; short of going the Robert Bresson route and hiring nonprofessionals, there's little a director can do, and, when the Coens cast Thornton, they must have known that the carved, contemplative set of his face makes him look like a deity looted from the wall of a Mayan temple. Add the shock of pale hair (and it *is* a shock), the rasp of his lit cigarette, and the sad slouch of his suits, and the guy, far from retreating to the dusk of oblivion, brightens into a working definition of cool. In this capacity, he supports the cause of the movie, which is not so much a morality tale as a delicate mission in style. "The Man Who Wasn't There" is in black-and-white, with a full range of grays for the discerning viewer; not since Hitchcock's "Shadow of a Doubt" have the minutiae of small-town life been picked apart with such an exacting eye. (Both films were shot in Orange, California.) When Doris lies soaking in the bath and asks Ed to shave her legs, we get a closeup of the floating hairs, as though everything is being taken down to be used as evidence against him. And the opening



Billy Bob Thornton as Ed the barber in "The Man Who Wasn't There."

MELINDA SUE GORDON/USA FILMS

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image of the film, a slowly revolving barber's pole, is so hypnotic that you wonder if it sent Ed into a trance—as if what we are about to see were not a matter of record but the dream diary of a nobody.

His crime of choice is blackmail: Ed finds out that his wife is carrying on with her boss, Big Dave (James Gandolfini), who runs a department store, and he tries to screw him out of ten grand. Things turn nasty, and the Coen boys get a chance to try out that slow, wound-up violence in which they have come to specialize; the ooze of black blood, as sticky as oil, seems too crude for so controlled a picture, and there are other patches, too, in which the careful arrangement of tone is thrown by a bum note. I am thinking of the big guys: Michael Badalucco as Doris's brother Frank, Jon Polito as a gay businessman, all toupee and sweat, and even Gandolfini—all of them encouraged to give outsize performances, as if to ruffle and embarrass the calm that prevails elsewhere. The one actor who gets it just right is Tony Shalhoub; he plays a San Francisco attorney named Freddy Riedenschneider, a vision in pinstripes and refulgent hair, and his superefficient gestures are funny enough to rattle the movie but never so broad that they leave it swollen or bruised. How the Coens can work up to his major speech for the defense, and then decide to report it secondhand through Ed's voice-over, heaven only knows.

I am betraying no secrets when I reveal the reason that Ed needed the ten grand: "Dry cleaning? Was I crazy to be thinking about it?" That is what our master criminal wants to invest in—a perfect period detail, delivered in a mournful murmur, and designed to make us think of Walter Neff, in "Double Indemnity," musing on the ankle-strapped charms of Phyllis Dietrichson. (Phyllis's last name in the original James M. Cain novel, Nirdlinger, becomes the name of the store where Doris works in "The Man Who Wasn't There," and the film features a medical examiner named Diedrickson. How well done do you like your movie references, sir?) As with most of the Coens' projects, you are invited to measure the precise length to which tongue has been inserted into cheek. Not for them the straightforward spoof, but, instead, a slightly creepy desire to have it both ways—to inject new life into noir, but also to laugh behind their hands at its antique solemnity, and to urge us to follow suit. And so one more popular art form is barricaded into the art house and relieved of its capacity to scare. "The Man Who Wasn't There" may be fine and smart, but is there not something nerdish and unbreathable in that finesse? It's like one of Ed's specialty haircuts: great in the chair, but not quite so much fun when you hit the open air.

The hot new French movie "Amélie," about a young waitress whose vocation is to orchestrate the happiness of others, has arrived here at last. Originally entitled "The Fabulous Destiny of Amélie Poulain," it has had French audiences lining up to see it again and again. Even the President of the Republic, sensing a commotion in the populace, requested a personal screening. One can only imagine the smile that widened across the Presidential visage as M. Chirac realized that here was one of the least revolutionary works in the history of cinema: a small, dippy, consoling pick-me-up, decked in bright array.

From the top down, Amélie (Audrey Tautou) consists of: a bob of black hair, irises as wide as an owl's, the mouth of a minx, and, farther south, a heart only slightly smaller than the Massif Central. At one point, when she catches sight of her crush-to-be (Mathieu Kassovitz), we even get to peer through her rib cage and, as if in momentary X-ray, check out the palpitating chambers beneath. Indeed, there are plenty of trick shots, as befits a film by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, the director of "Delicatessen." If that picture was cinematic Bosch, cooking up variations on the hateful and the hoggish, this is an equally busy riff on a sweeter and more jubilant artistry—on Chagall and Utrillo, or on the evanescent Dufy. When Amélie cries, it is not merely her eyes that brim with tears but her whole face, and so on, until the full length of her body cascades into a private waterfall of weeping.

One evening, she discovers a box of aging mementos—photographs, a tiny toy bicycle—behind a bathroom wall. After a little light sleuthing, she tracks down their original owner, now middle-aged, and leaves the box in a phone booth for him to find; it's a critical moment for the film, because Jeunet refuses to stay with the man in his instant of revelation, but cuts back at once to his boyhood, and to the sentimental story of each memento. As a director, he seems incapable of trusting his actors to carry the mood, preferring always to lend them a backup—jokes, fripperies, kooky camera angles—that they don't require. The people who dislike "Amélie" (and the tally is almost into double digits, even in France) accuse it of being too nice, but that in itself is no cause for complaint. Anything that contributes to the gaiety of nations is welcome these days, and I wouldn't want to be the killjoy who stops you going to see Jeunet's picture; the problem is that, when a movie falls prey to this level of fidgeting and fuss, the joy itself is in danger—if not of being killed, at least of being frittered away.

As with "The Man Who Wasn't There," everything hangs on the central figure; we may note in passing that both Ed and Amélie are unmoved by sex, and that their subsequent deeds can be read as alternative adventures. Ed turns to crime, Amélie to unceasing beneficence; she conjoins lovers, feeds her father's wanderlust, and finally attends to a passion of her own. Whether all this makes her a genuine character, or simply a force for good in a tight top, I cannot quite fathom, nor was I convinced by fans of the film who claim that "Amélie" makes one fall in love with Paris all over again. The movie adds little to the misting and mythologizing of the city that was undertaken by Marcel Carné decades ago, in films like "Hotel du Nord," or by Jean-Pierre Melville in his trenchcoated thrillers; also, unless I am missing something, Paris and I have never broken up. ♦

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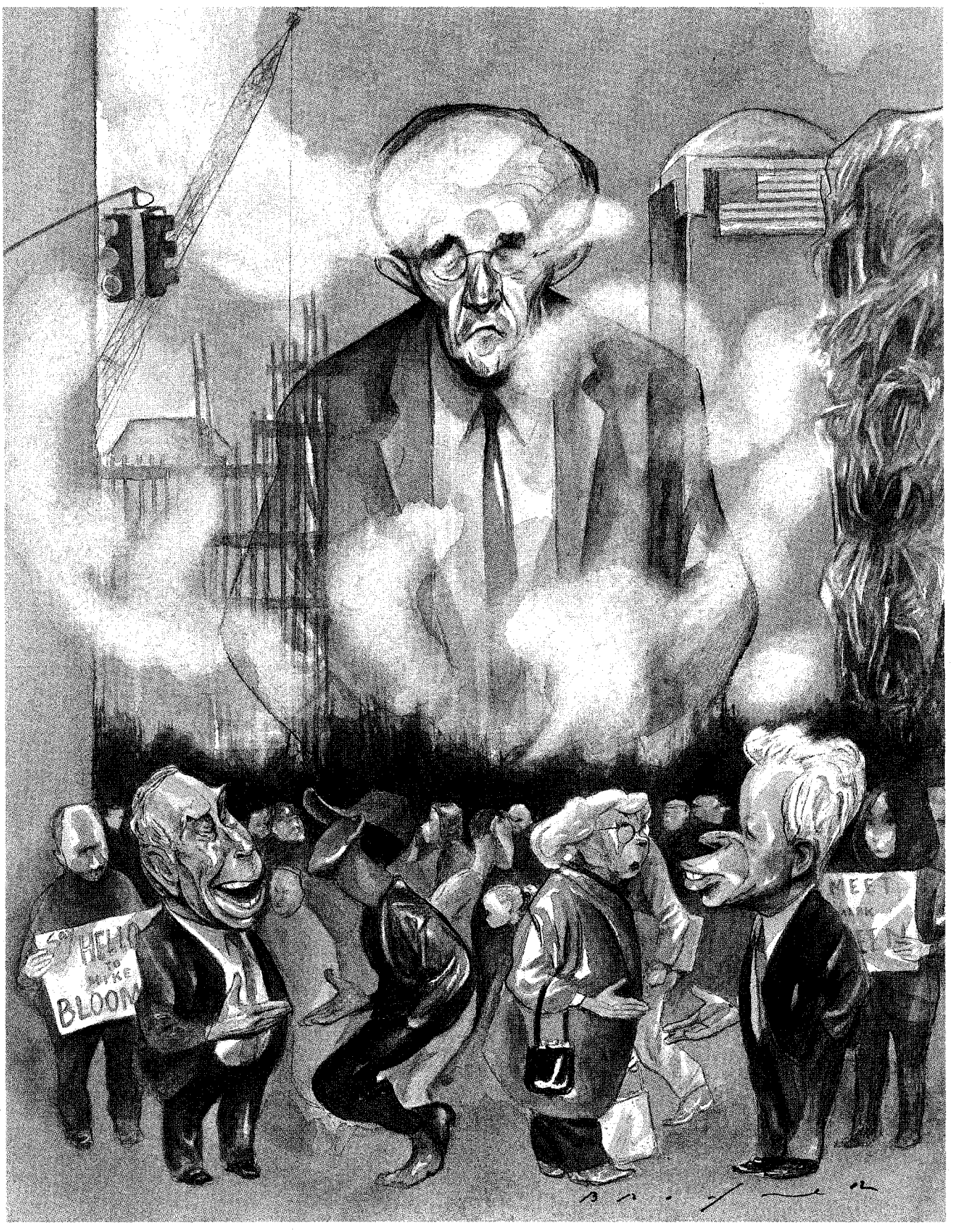

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